

This Old House

75 pages of
**MONEY
SAVERS**
and makeover
ideas

35 amazing real-life redos

PORCHES, KITCHENS, FAMILY ROOMS,
BATHS, AND MORE

TIPS
to make
DIY easier
p. 96

Plus

19 fun ways
to welcome
guests

ultimate
spa bath

clever bedroom
storage



BONUS!

*We found
America's
most inspiring
remodel*
TURN THE PAGE

JULY 2012
READER-CREATED ISSUE

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075



MEET THE GRAND-PRIZE WINNERS

The Wallacavages of Philadelphia put everything—and then some—into the 1890s Tudor they rescued. Read their inspiring story, and find out who else is taking home a cash prize, beginning on page 76.

THEY WON
\$5,000
AND A
2012 GMC Sierra

The Wallacavage remodel is just one of many remarkable things in this issue.



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Readers whose tips, projects, and remodeling tales appear in this issue

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Tons of lath and plaster that reader *John T. McBride* removed during the 33-month gut reno of his Neagunee, Michigan, home

YOUR ISSUE BY THE NUMBERS

Stats and facts from the thousands* of entries you submitted for TOH's fifth-annual Reader-Created Issue

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Hurricanes that *Kenneth and Beth Wheeler* survived while converting their Orange, Texas, ranch into a New Orleans-style jewel (p. 24)

73,349

Dollars saved by *Al and Meroua Holston* with their decision to make, rather than buy, new cabinetry for their winning kitchen remodel (p. 84)

8,200

Hours that *Rebecca and Karl Darley* put into restoring a stately Queen Anne in Joliet, Illinois. It was the eyesore across the street from their own place.

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Minutes it took for *Park Mallescu* and six friends to fill the first of five dumpsters with garbage from his new home (p. 76)

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*

3,192

Reader Remodel Contest entries we received via mail, e-mail, and the Web

25,536

Photos of your projects and remodels we reviewed for this issue. (Yes, we looked at them all.)

1,018

Aren't all seen, in dollars, that *Matthew Briscoff* expects to receive from his Ann Arbor, Michigan, utility for the energy produced by his home's 36 solar panels

25

Days it took *Kathel Santel* of Arlington, Virginia, to rebuild her kitchen after it was ruined by a plumbing disaster

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Age, in centuries, of the Dutch backsplash tiles in *Clara Briscoff*'s Pittsford, New York, kitchen

875

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1,200

Board feet of framing and trim lumber yielded by the felled pine in *Raylan Hill*'s backyard—enough for the entire remodel of his Kenosha, Michigan, home



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BY LINDA WOODS & JILL FINE, 2012
ILLUSTRATION: TONY JONES



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remodeling editor
July 2012: 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48
Blogging: MATH

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July 2012: 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48
Blogging: MATH

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WEEKEND
REMODEL

This comfy queen-size storage bed has plenty of places to stash your stuff. Thanks to a reader's request, we created DIY-friendly plans so that you can build your own.



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ask the readers of this old house

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THIS OLD HOUSE, 2012 JULY 10-11
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Family matters

"Moia, moia, moia." That was the sound my son was making as he chewed the rattle of his Sophie the Giraffe doll. I had packed him into his car seat and my tools into the trunk early one Sunday to go to my mother's. I was meeting my brother, who needed to make a pair of wardrobe closets, and Mom's garage in our suburban. Plus, she provides the babysitting service.

The little guy always makes the "nom, nom, nom" sound when he's chewing on something he likes, be it a cookie or his dinner or my finger. It's a noise similar to the one Blower Scarpino makes when he scarf down, so, not surprisingly, it was making me hungry. But that was ok, because Moore's is also the family restaurant and Blower did be making us a big hash, even more patches in somehow when there's work to be done.

As I drove and he continued to gauge my thoughts directed to the stories you sent as this Reader-Created Issue. Three stands of them. This is the fifth such one we've done, and each year you've topped yourselves with even more creativity, more skill, more beautiful energy. But mostly I was struck by how similar my own family's efforts were to yours—your shared labors, your willingness to push us to make a home for those you love with the only parable being that you did it somehow better.

That's a powerful thing, and no wonder: It more appears than in the Overbrook Farm neighborhood of Philadelphia, where the Wallacyns family lives in an 1890s Tudor. That's the web site on the stairs there, having just presented them with the *2010 Old House Reader* Remodel Contest grand prize of \$5,000 and a GMC Sierra pickup truck. Mark and Katie learned about *Old House*—from gay farmer to gardener—but most especially on family to help them save the firmer house and turn it into a home. Mark tells their story on page 76, and it's an amazing example, but they weren't alone.

Take Brent Kinn and his family. Scott, he and his wife, Kim, did most of the hard work on their house, but finally came to the tract in major ways. Once, they installed carpet, hooked up appliances, and brought furniture into the new nest while the couple was on their honeymoon; a few years later the family picked up again, finishing up a nursery while Kim was going back to school.

In so many of your stories, family is right there. Tim and Vicki Peterson are in a picnic to prove it. That's just Timmy needed at the Moses home, alongside the bucket of gravy his father was using to finish the family lunch. (See how it turned out on page 34.) Sometimes that closeness spans continents. After Boyer video-chatted with his mother on his 10th birthday, he wrote her from the back fields of Afghanistan to his girlfriend, Laura Miller, back in North Carolina at the university the same hour. Both are master sergeants in the U.S. Army Special Operations Command.



...and the ...



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PROJECT OF THE WEEK

HOW TO BUILD A TOOL BENCH



Being able to find the right tool at the right time is a key to DIY success. A well-organized tool storage bench designed for easy access will improve your efficiency and project outcome. Think double-duty and plan for a solid 40-year-span bench that doubles as a work surface. Though it may look complicated, the construction couldn't be simpler.

You'll find a huge selection of tools to help with this or any home project at The Home Depot nearest you. And for easy how-to instructions and a list of the tools and materials you'll need, go to thisoldhouse.com/project.

PROJECT OF THE WEEK CALENDAR

- June 7 Build a Tool Bench
- June 14 Build an Outdoor Bar Cart
- June 21 Plant a Room
- June 28 Install a Front-Entry Flagpole

letter (July 2012)

Then there's the multi-generational effort. What's remarkable about the renovations the LaRoca-Bravo clan did on their place is that they did it to bring four generations—Fred Senior and Grace LaRoca, Fred Junior and his wife, Connie, their daughter, Jessica Bravo, her husband, Tony, and their 5-year-old son, Luke Tony—under the same roof. Don't know about you, but if four generations of my family cradled to live together, we'd all end up under another roof entirely—the one that covers the state penitentiary. Except for my granddaughters, who pretty much leapt to herself. With age comes wisdom, I guess.

Speaking of wisdom, there's plenty on display in "You Made My Dreams Come True," on page 48. In it, Kate Mortlander gives voice to the thing that binds us—to our families, to the larger TOH family—this way: "Some people build and fix... others go to movies and plays... We remodel our house. That is where we are, where we have grown to become."

I think that description applies to so many of us, and that is most definitely not a bad thing. In fact, I'm proud of it, and I know you are too. The only question might be when do we become such people. In some cases it's quite young: Gina VanderReiden, a single mom, moved from a condo to a house with a yard for her 10-year-old son, Jake. The plan needed plenty of work, which Gina took on, with the help of Jake. The boy became her "right-hand helper with gardening, tilting, and painting," she says. "It's awesome."

And then there are men who grew up and looked in the mirror and saw a boy in his suit, Sophie still in his smooth, eyes closed, fur asleep. He's just 8 years old, not quite a life is wasted on him even, yet, and 10 seems a long way off. I can't wait. But I will. And when the day arrives and he picks up a shovel or a trowel to become my own right-hand helper, well, that'll be awesome indeed.



Jessica Bravo



Kate Mortlander



Gina & Jake VanderReiden

We Make House Calls



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STANLEY

They DIYed their decor

Some people have an eye for transformation. We spotlight these three readers who found clever ways to turn everyday items into useful pieces—often for a lot less cash than buying new. Let their projects inspire you to do the same.



MASON JARS → CHANDELIER

Cassandra Stawbough
LAKELAND, FLORIDA

Cassandra and her husband wanted a chandelier for their dining room.

They found one on Craigslist for \$400. So they made one instead using a 1-inch-thick wood panel, jute rope, two types of chairs, and mason jars from a clearance store. It cost just \$100.73, she says.



PICTURE FRAME → JEWELRY DISPLAY

Kara Kersten
PAINEVILLE, KANSAS



I suggested my niece with a room makeover, says Kara, who grew up a way to show off the town's jewelry collection. She removed the backing and glass from a picture frame, spray-painted it and hung it on the wall.

Photo: © iStockphoto.com/Markus Spiller

WOOD PALLET → CHAIR

Tiffany Holt
MARS HILL, NORTH CAROLINA

Tiffany's father often brings home pallets from the plant where he works and uses them as kindling. That was until they decided to look like an Adirondack chair. Tiffany saw a video on YouTube showing how to work with pallets and decided to try it.



a new addition



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New to how-to? Apprentice yourself!

If you don't have a contractor ready to call, hiring a pro to help guide you through a remodel and teach you basic skills can be the easiest—and the surest—path to DIY self-reliance. Here, TOH readers-turned-pupils share their tips for finding, working with, and learning the ropes from professional craftsmen.

► **Find a good communicator.** Amanda Neves and her husband, Christopher, renovated their Seattle kitchen themselves but needed a tutorial at the start of various projects, including installing subway tiles on the walls. Because they wanted pros who'd do work alongside them, not just for them, Amanda sought out contractors who had the patience and willingness to explain a complex how-to in layman's terms. "You need people with great communication skills so that they'll be good teachers," she says.

► **Pay by the hour.** While most pros are paid by the project, Tom Luegan of Fairfield, Connecticut, found a handyman experienced in siding to help him upgrade his house's exterior for \$30 an hour. "That way I could use him only when I needed expertise," says Tom, who also got help with insulation and exterior trim.

► **Hire to the off-season.** Andrew and Michelle Hoffman got a contractor to work part time helping them remodel their

152-year-old home in Fort Wayne, Indiana, because of the winter—the job's slow season. The catch: "We had no understanding," Andrew says. "It was a lucrative job coming along, but I leave our project and come back when he could."

► **Appeal to a passion.** Mark Walkowicz (this year's Reader Remodel Contest grand winner; see page 78) tempted a master plumber whose work he'd admired in his father's Overbrook Farms neighborhood of Philadelphia to guide him through painting as well as plaster, trim and window repair in his 1995 Tudor. The painter agreed to help in part because he was fond of restoring old homes like Mark's. "Ed [Tubb] taught me how to preserve the original woodwork. Then I did 18 houses myself. He even loaned me his tools," says Mark.

► **Tap on Twitter.** These craftsmen are often looking to pick up a little work and are

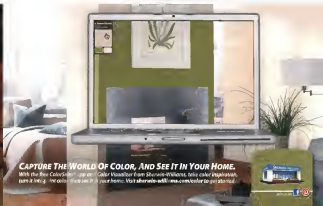
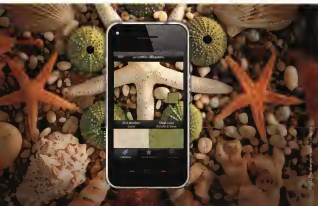
happy to impart their lifetime of skills to an amateur. Pamela Down at Clemmons, North Carolina, located a retired carpenter through her Twitter to help her build mudroom closets. Other ways to find a pro: Ask the local hardware store owner or an admitted order at the senior center or hang a sign at the public library. Just be sure your pro is up-to-date on safety codes.

► **Get free advice.** Liz Mauly and her husband, Jesse, who converted a pebbledash bungalow into their family home, began each task with research via how-to books and the Internet. "You Tube videos were a huge help," Liz says. Another reliable source: the retailer plumber and staff at her local Home Depot. She found out which days he worked, then she'd call and pepper him with questions. "I promised I wouldn't hold him accountable. I messaged as," says Liz.

► **Opt for an inspector.** The Mauleys also brought in experts to check their work at the end of a project. "My husband did all the wiring," Liz says. "So we hired an electrician to make sure the final connections and running the power in, to be sure Jesse didn't make a mistake."

► **Mize your network.** A friend in the Nurses' parenting group who is a professional home contractor helped them get their granite kitchen counters. "They negotiated the contractor to return for beer and hangout time," Amanda says. To find assistance in your social circle, start by asking up your project and posting your needs on Facebook. If you've got skills in, say, accounting or sewing, consider offering services in trade. Someone's boarder to have a friend of a friend, or even a contractor cousin, who's up for a starter.

—MAMMALEDY



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Vinyl tiles

You'll be floored by the clever ways T&H reader Stan Williams repurposes these peel-and-stick squares, with and without the paper backing.

1 Protect against leaks.

Line the bottoms of a cabinet under sink to prevent water damage or cover one that's already been beat up (just because it's the leak first).

2 Make a jig.

A measured length of tile becomes a guide for drilling holes in consistent distance apart—when installing new cabinet knobs for example.

4

Clad a birdhouse roof.

To create a rainproof covering, use a utility knife to cut tile into small rectangles, and lay the "white" (underside) faces for long-term adhesion, dot the back of each piece with waterproof glue.

5 Decorate a lampshade.

Cast a shadowy design by sticking small tile pieces, in immediate shapes, to the inside of an inexpensive paper shade.

6 Create plant coasters.

For a no-drug solution under a potted plant, cut two tiles into

matching circles and stick them back-to-back.

7 Sham stuff.

Use cut strips to stylize a leaning bookcase or a wobbly table, or to align a door during installation.

8 Add a backsplash.

Cover the wall behind the washer and dryer

or the utility sink for a hit of color and easy wipe-clean surface.

9 Scoop up messes.

A tile makes a great in-a-pinch doorknob. Press one edge flat to the floor. Hold the other side up to make a snow-shovel-like curve against which to swab your broom.

more 10 uses

Find out what you can do with vinyl tiles at www.kidde.com



Stan Williams
NEW YORK, NEW YORK
"I have a knack for reusing leftover supplies."



10

Your Home Is Filled With Hassles.



Your Smoke Alarm Shouldn't Be One of Them

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Ways you wowed us

After we asked thousands of you for our Reader Remodel Contest it became abundantly clear that we need some improvement, whether a small renovation or a clever problem solver or an elegant architectural detail, we're tough for a TGH reader to tackle. These standout are a small sampling of the impressive work you sent us.



Graceful side porch

My husband, Alvin, and I were lucky the design still was good. It was long known we were in New Orleans, we took so many photos of it that the owners probably thought we were stalkers! It's built with materials that can weather the climate. We love to sit out here with a glass of wine."

Beck Wilcox ORANGE, TEXAS



Half-wall room divider

The front "sunlight" got into the house, with no transoms, with a half wall and a cornice, a cornice feature of French and Portuguese like ours, does the trick. I found the base and columns at salvage stores and it now makes perfect sense to our visitors."

Eric Dodson INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA



Wash-basin vanity

A working cowboy and his family once lived in our 1930s house. It is keeping with its rustic country style. I got rid of most of the old vanity and replaced it with this one."

Mike Kowalski
ELGIN, ARIZONA



Flower-painted floor

I had a painting of a flower garden for the floor of my new sitting room, which was once a sleeping porch. And I found just the right idea in a TGH story [Visit flowerhouse.com/p10032 for the how to.] I selected the design in chalk before applying paint and glass."

Amanda Barry
HERNDON, VIRGINIA



Tree-around patio

These granite tiles from a property my husband Don managed, he loved a soft blue but got no tiles. They don't last, so we couldn't locate right after it was, and they give every access to the patio. Look underneath."

Julie Mayford
MCLELLAN, VIRGINIA



Restored garden shed

This shed, built on our property in 1930, was originally a playhouse and then used briefly as a home. My husband, Bob, and I relocated it and turned it into a garden shed. The color scheme was inspired by the orange quartz and gray schist on our 1930s stone house."

Jenny Jordan
THORNTON, PENNSYLVANIA





Historic entry We were thrilled to find the original front doors of our 1875 Bala-nika tucked on front porch. And when we removed the brackets and trim from salvaged old growth redwood, Myrtle Pitt did months of research just to pick out the color scheme and detail the painting.

Tam Miller ELGIN, ILLINOIS



Two-level tree house Our family's dream outdoor hangout became a reality when my dad, Rick, offered to help us make it. We built the floors of the decks on the ground and used a screw to lift them into place.

Matt Parel KINGSTON, TENNESSEE



Paneled foyer

The space of this design reflects two courses of staggered panels, was the result of a friendly competition between my wife, Terry, and me. (Sherwin) She also designed the tile pattern, which was inspired by a local artist.

Elaine Elfortree
BETHUNE,
COLORADO



Garden fountain Our house is in a lovely old lot. So I wanted smaller features drawn out the landscape. The style, similar to that of some water fountains at a local garden show, suits the yard's Pennsylvania fieldstone walls.

Joyce Hunsford
HATBORO, MASSACHUSETTS

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Powered by The Best Chefs

They triumphed with a toaster oven

Combining a lot of dark furniture for 11 months as their dream kitchen took shape, a couple didn't stop these readers from eating in—and dining in style. By DEBORAH HALLGREN

You've heard about beautiful kitchens where no one ever cooks. How about a couple who enjoy cooking so much that they endured a year-long DIY ride while also preparing all their meals—in the basement?

"I don't like to eat out that much," says Deborah Hall, one-half of this gourmet team. "I would like to be in the kitchen, making food the way I want to make it."

That applies even if the "kitchen" happens to be an ad hoc afterthought by a toaster oven. "Sometimes we ate in the basement too, it was easier than climbing the stairs and carrying our food through the wreck of a kitchen to get to the dining room," Deborah says.

The couple had torn up the existing kitchen in their 1927 Tudor Revival, in Rochester, New York, to add a pro-style range and vent hood and update the countertops, sink, and floor tile. To preserve the kitchen's vintage flavor, husband Dan Post salvaged the original paneled cabinet fronts and built new boxes, something he had never undertaken before. "We did everything ourselves except the tile and counters," says Deborah.

Dist and disorder ensued. But not the usual takeout. "Don looked up our gas cooking, along with two tiny fridges my son had at college," Deborah says. They kept the old fridge plugged in, too, so that the cold-drawn meats made in advance. Kitchen gear went in labeled boxes stacked in the dining room "so if we had guests or I needed something, I could easily get it out."



BY DEBORAH HALLGREN

LEFT: Homeowner Dan Post made the countertop a temporary kitchen with towel-covered plastic for small appliances. ABOVE: The new kitchen has a natural gas and the wife Deborah Hall's favorite countertop granite.

avoiding
takeout
at all costs

Den stippled plastic to the laundry room ceiling to black fabric to increase by the work overhead. The laundry sink became the dish-washing station, and the microwave and a clever rice cooker accessory joined the party.

The below-ground setup came in handy when Deborah decided to make a decadent beef Wellington over the holidays. "I'd been doing this for 10 years," she says, suggesting that a little chaos won't going to get in the way of a family tradition.

They rendered out of a master oven? All the more enjoyable when a new feature is emerging upstairs.

Balsamic Beef Wellington

SERVES 4

For the dough:

- 4 ounces cream cheese (room temperature)
- 1 shallot
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Salt, pepper, and thyme (season to taste)

For the beef:

- 1/4 pounds center-cut beef tenderloin, tied with twine to bell's shape
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 3 ounces fine pork, crushed
- 3 ounces pork pastry
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- Salt and pepper (season to taste)

1. To make dough: finely chop mushrooms, shallot, and garlic. Add butter and salt to large sauté pan, which hot add mushrooms. Sauté over medium heat until color and moisture evaporates. Season with salt, pepper, and thyme. Cool in fridge.

2. To prepare beef: Grate with salt and season with salt and pepper. Beat in hot frying pan about 1 minute per side. When in plastic and refrigerate for 2 hours.

3. To assemble: Remove tenderloin from fridge and cut off twine. Spread dough on large sheet of plastic. On slightly floured surface roll out pork pastry to create a rectangular bag enough to enclose beef



(about 10 by 13 inches). Spread doughs and dough filling in a 1/2 inch per. Place tenderloin center of dough, pork side down. Roll over the long side of dough and seal with beaten egg. Roll up until no wrapping is present, trimming any excess, and seal. Sprinkle with salt and place seam side down on buttered sheet of parchment.



ABOVE: The new, light-filled kitchen is a luxury for homeowners Don Post and Deborah Hall.

BELOW: The hall and their son, who lived their life in the kitchen with his mother's meals.

LEFT: The hall's old beef Wellington assembled at an old cooking space in their basement laundry room.

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Frank and Janice go to Hollywood

These readers traded sweat equity for high-end fixtures and finishes that evoke the effervescence of 1930s Tinseltown. Here's your ticket to transforming your bath without the movie-star price tag. by **DELLAN JAMES** • Photographs by **DAVID DELANEY**

a dozen ways to glaze up your bath



Janice and Frank Gengereilli
BLOOMFIELD, NEW JERSEY
"If we were going to do this bath, it had to be magnificent."

After 30 years of raising their master bath's busy orange-and-brown wallpaper, dingy beige tile, and dim light from one pearly window, Janice and Frank Gengereilli wanted the opposite for their remodeled space. They made it bright and airy by installing a new leaded-glass window and exposing the ceiling rafters. Auburn-violet palette, mirrored surfaces, and crystal accents—all hallmarks of 1930s Hollywood Regency style—added sparkle. And a pedestal soaker tub and marble-topped vanity gave the room a luxurious feel. While the couple splurged on materials, they saved by doing most of the labor, including framing out the window. Janice even silver-lined the vanity mirror's frame and the chandelier to coordinate their finishes. "No one knows your taste or works as hard for you as you do," says Janice. To bring the Gengereillis' silver-screen style to your bath in a more modest budget, read on.

accent window
Lead a leaded-glass window to boost elegance and functionality without sacrificing privacy. Oval floral pattern window, \$337; homedesign.com

apothecary bottles
Toss plastic soap dispensers for retro chic: glass containers. Tall bottle, \$19; wide-necked bud vase, \$8; westlake.com. Glazebath is a shopper's dream: \$36; amazon.com—but we found it for just \$4 at T.J. Maxx.



gilded mirror
This transatlantic mirror is a made-for-TV special: the showiness of the Hollywood Regency style. \$194; shadesoflady.com

gooseneck faucet
The graceful arch of the spout and the round handles make the styling of the couple's faucet, but for half the price. Graber faucet set, \$50; directkitcheningsupply.com



marble-top vanity
The Gengereillis' vanity was custom-made. For a similar look, fit the new countertop to this stock sink cabinet with mirrors cut to size at a glass shop. Glue the mirror in place with mirror mastic. Vanity with marble top and undermount sink, \$650; wayfair.com

glimmering chandelier
This vintage-style fixture will draw eyes up to the ceiling and let light stream through its faceted crystal drops. \$130; lampsplus.com



vanity accessories
Accents with light-reflecting surfaces, such as mirror glass or polished steel, add shine without taking up much visual space. Tissue holder and glass soap dish, \$20 each; lampsplus.com. Mercury glass candle, \$36; parl.com and vase, \$12; westlake.com



crystal sconces
Frame a vanity mirror with accents of swarovski-based candle-like glow. The Gengereillis' hand-cut crystal lights were \$280 each, but these shiny look-alikes are just \$127; wayfair.com



get this look for less



tile tabbies

Save the splurge for a unique tile display in the Gangesville shower: a floral mosaic border and a chair rail divide field tiles set as squares on bottom and diamond on top. Details cut from the border under the mold! Floral border: \$2.50 per linear foot; chair rail: \$2.00 per linear foot; gray mosaic (lower floor and ceiling): \$2.00 per square foot; white mosaic (lower floor and ceiling): \$2.00 per square foot; and subway tile: \$1.00 per square foot. Stone walling: \$1.00 per square foot.

textured plaster

Add depth and a rich look to walls with Water's Traveler on Venetian plaster shown in Silver Shimmer. \$3.00 per gallon. home depot.com



pedestal tub

Make the tub the main event! Centered under the window, it's the first thing you see upon entering the Gangesville bathroom. For a more affordable version of this next-day tub, choose this acrylic one: \$1,190. signaturehardware.com



plush towels

Sign green towels add a pop of color and soften the look of the bath's hard surfaces. Bath towels: \$20 each. bedbathandbeyond.com



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landscaping

Her yard's a bloomin' miracle

Two years after taking on a barren backyard, this passionate gardener is still weaving it into a rich tapestry of color and texture. BY SUE VASILEKA AND DEBORAH BALZANO



Joyce Hannaford
64, FINE MASSACHUSETTS

"Maintaining the garden takes about 60 hours a week—but I love it!"

Try matching Joyce Hannaford in peak growing season and you may get nowhere. "I don't take my phone with me anymore," she says of her freeps outside "The Terrace, Hibernia Lane 12—luckily before the sprinklers locked on." Wandering where that growing zone is on the map? Turns out Joyce has redefined her own third-of-an-acre yard into a dozen or so garden zones led by an automated system hooked up to a 150-foot-deep well. She will break 100 feet of hose around the garden, though. "I like to really soak certain plants. I do it late in the day. I find it soothing. It forces me to take a harder look at a spot."

Friends may wonder how Joyce could look any harder than she already has. Since her first attempt at bringing the then-desolate yard to life 12 years ago, when she planted 70 day-lilies passed along by a friend, Joyce has managed to pack trees, perennials, and seasonal color into every available inch. "This is my passion," she says simply, adding that before reaching retirement age she thought of work as a way to support her growing habit. And, no, she can't tell you how much she's spent over the years. "I don't want to know," she adds.

Other people collect art, play poker, or spend all day on Facebook. For Joyce, who grew up gardening in Foxcroft, New Hampshire, and still remembers her gateway plant—



BEFORE



BUILT FOR A RIVERLAUNDRY

After clearing a pond that had been gone for years (BEFORE), homeowner Joyce Hannaford created two levels, gathering spots (ARROWS) surrounded by curved stone walls, gardens, and a walkway. RIGHT: Agave plants frame its way through. Back: Shasta daisies, three Time Hydrangeas and Goldcrest black-eyed Susans.



SWEEPING CURVES
LEFT: The path from the driveway to the red-tiled patio curves gently to the left, creating a sense of movement and drama. The path is lined with various flowers, including purple and yellow blooms, and a small white structure in the background.

layered drama

LEFT: A path lined with various flowers, including purple and yellow blooms, and a small white structure in the background. ABOVE: A layered perennial bed with various flowers, including purple and yellow blooms, and a small white structure in the background.

luscious lawns

Topiary of the yard's entry from the driveway to the red-tiled patio. The path is lined with various flowers, including purple and yellow blooms, and a small white structure in the background.

color everywhere

BELOW LEFT: Lush container and garden plants, including purple and yellow blooms, and a small white structure in the background. BELOW RIGHT: A view of the garden house, framed by various flowers, including purple and yellow blooms, and a small white structure in the background.



and the 10-pound machete it yielded for flower-grade show-and-tell—few things are so satisfying as watching a patch of earth burst forth. These days she's more into flower than food production and puts in lots of reliable bloomers, last summer the crowned 875 daisies all flowering at once.

When Joyce and her husband, Charles, bought their house, the yard was mostly spindly oaks and overgrown brush. After taking care of much-needed repairs made, "we started

trimming apart the yard," Joyce says. "It looked like a logging operation back then." Surviving trees, bushes, and daphnes were pruned or moved to new spots, clearing the way for two brick patios linked by stone steps—followed by an avalanche of color.

In a mad dash to find the best flower varieties and color combinations, "I drove all over New England," Joyce says. Ultimately she settled down with a nearby nursery, where she loads up her trusty SUV on a regular basis.

Complete one morning in early May, she needed all her tools for "I have to buy more seeds for the water feature [see Home Solutions, page 17], then I'm off to the nursery for impatiens. Then I'll stop by a trade school where they teach gardening and sell plants to raise funds. They have the Geranium I can't find at the nursery and colored geraniums in odd lots." The impatiens were donated for five whiskey half barrels and the cry and geraniums for a row of window boxes installed, naturally, with associated mowers.

What is more and more too much? "Geraniums are all cut from the same cloth," says Joyce, who belongs to the local garden club and loves nothing more than reflowering

plants crowded out of her yard. "We don't just garden to look outside. We do nothing." She adds, "There's always more to learn."

A fastidious note taker and amateur photographer, Joyce takes her iPad out to the garden to record and adjust her plantings. Like other gardeners, she will also happily share her long-hour gardening knowledge enough to exchange tips with strangers over the fence, a landscape who happened by turned out to be a landscape architect whom she now counts as a friend-and-reverend.

To help celebrate her garden's most glorious day of the year, in mid-July, Joyce creates in about 80 plants. They come near a series of flat, brownish soil stepping stones crowned by one bearing the inscription: "WILLIAM'S WIFE, Susan was a close friend of Joyce's, and the two women had collected the stones in France during one of their last trips together. After Susan died of ovarian cancer, in 2001, Joyce set aside this area as a memorial."

"She loved coming to this way because she said you never know what you'll see—it's always a surprise," Joyce recalls of her friend. "The garden is always evolving."

Just like any well-loved, well-tended life. ■

A few of her favorites

Flower-oriental lilies require full sun and well-draining soil. These are daisies, last for weeks.

1. 'Belconick' Double pink flowers with white variegation open in April/early May, July and August.
2. 'Muscadine' Wide white flowers with pink dots open in July/August.
3. 'Asasque' New red flowers with white edges bloom anytime that there is a lot of rain.

August and September



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Ding-dong, ditch your old doorbell

Reader Edith Dean reminds us how simple it is to jazz up your entry with a stylish push button. *By AMANDA CRUTTLETON • Photographs by WENDIELY WOODS*

When renovating her family's Cape Cod, in New Hope, Pennsylvania, Edith Dean left no detail undone, not even the doorbell. "We joked it was the only thing we wouldn't touch," she says. "But one thing led to another, and before we knew it, even the doorbell went." Edith chose a classic-lined bell button in a nickel-plated finish (right) to complement her new handle and lockset. But the options are electric, lemons, which became popular in the 1930s in response to mechanical bells rung with the pull of a chain or the twist of a thumb turn, are almost nonexistent. Which is why we gathered up our favorites for you: 18 doorbell buttons that offer a warm welcome to guests even before announcing their arrival.

shopping

How to make a buzz-worthy first impression



Edith's choice



sleek and simple
TRIMMERS.NET
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Made of: Brass with a satin-nickel finish
Cost: \$5; trimmers.net

baroque
BAYVIEW
Size: 1 1/4" x 2 1/4"
Made of: Lustrous brass
Cost: \$40;
bayviewhardware.com



classic **colleg**
www.davidcollection.com
Size: 2 1/4" diameter
Made of: Polished brass
Cost: \$20; davidcollection.com

formal floral
BAYVIEW
Size: 1 1/4" x 2 1/4"
Made of: Brass with a satin-nickel finish
Cost: \$40; bayviewhardware.com



beaded
VINCENT MENDO
Size: 2 1/4" square
Made of: Powder
Cost: \$80;
vincentmendo.com

craftsmenONE FINCHHOME'S
HARDWARE

Size: 12 1/2" W x 2 1/2" H

Made of Copper with an
antiqued brass finishCost: \$77. cph.com**golden traditional**

SALTIN

Size: 2 1/2" diameter

Made of Polished brass

Cost: \$44.

saltinhardware.com**classic hospitality**

THOMAS BETTS

Size: 10 1/2" x 2 1/2" W

Made of brass with a
silver finishCost: \$24. tbt.com/btbs.com**antique chic**

NOR SHORTLODGE

Size: 2 1/2" x 2 1/2" W

Made of Zinc with an
antiqued brass finishCost: \$24. nsh.com**french flair**

ATLAS HOMEWORKS

Size: 2 1/2" x 2 1/2" W

Made of Brass with a
brushed nickel finish

Cost: \$36.

atlashomeworks.com**art deco**

UPRECHT WINDO

Size: 2 1/2" x 2 1/2" W

Made of Pewter with
an antiqued finish

Cost: \$27.

doorsthefactory.com**rustic lake**

RESTORATION HARDWARE

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restorationhardware.com

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contoured
brass knob
Size: 2 1/2" W x 3 1/2" H
Made of brass with a white enamel finish
Cost: \$20
hampshire.com



whimsical
white wood
Size: 3 1/2" diameter
Made of brass with an antique finish
Cost: \$18
daveanddarcy.com

colonial
wood or antique hardware
Size: 2 1/2" W x 4 1/4" H
Made of wrought-iron with a black powder-coated finish
Cost: \$32
houseandgardenhardware.com



embossed floral
brass
Size: 2" square
Made of brass with a powder finish
Cost: \$45
hampshire.com



mid-century modern
brass knob
Size: 2 1/2" W x 4 1/4" H
Made of brass with a polished-brass finish
Cost: \$15
rejuvenation.com



vintage greeting
brass knob
Size: 1 1/2" W x 3 1/2" H
Made of brass with an oil-rubbed bronze finish
Cost: \$18
daveanddarcy.com

enveloped
brass knob
Size: 2 1/2" diameter
Made of brass with a hand-painted enamel finish
Cost: \$42
houseandgarden.com



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THE KITCHEN.**

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Thomasville
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"You made my dreams come true"

Three thoughtful readers give credit to those who helped them turn a dream into a home

To my father:



As you know, our family was never much for renovation. We were never one to talk about feelings, console our failures, or even celebrate accomplishments. In fact, the wiser, more mature who worked long but still found time to build the house we grew up in wasn't Dad or Papa or even Father. He was the Man with the Hammer, always crafting, always passing things on his way to fix something else. Only now am I beginning to understand the value in that.

After a long search, and without a lot of money, I bought my little house out of desperation. It was unhappy with my choice, but you were the one who took over the grips paper and began to draw. You showed me what my house could be, and I learned to imagine too. A cozy porch to catch the summer nights, or the fireplace to warm the winter ones. You assured me it was all possible, all within reach.

It's a good thing I didn't know how much I didn't know. I figured I had learned how to do all this stuff through osmosis, but I really didn't have a clue. The first time I had to use the miter saw, I thought, Good grief, how do I work this thing? But you always calmly assured I could, and in the end, you were right. Over the next six years, we slowly turned the house into a home—creeping around in the patch of an attic hoping not to go crawling through to the floor below, laughing the day the indoor waterfall came through the ceiling after the water department guy turned on the main with the upstairs

pipes open, discovering that beneath the asbestos siding and aluminum windows slept a handsome Clarissa longbow. The days were long, we worked hard and ate a lot of Home Depot food dogs. But we came to read each other well—ready with the next tool or simply standing back and appreciating a good day's work. And I came to appreciate the silent communication that exists only between family. The wordless language that tells you that you share more than you know.

The vision, which you built soundly, slowed you down, and I have had to carry on largely by myself. I persevered, and the house, which was once a neighborhood eyesore, is now dubbed Pin Cottage and sports a bronze plaque awarded by the city.

This letter is just to say thank you. Thank you for all your reassurances, for your guidance, and for giving me a home. You will never be just "good ol' Dad," but rather okay. You are the Man with the Hammer. A Man. And I am your daughter.

Loni
LONI CHEMELL
YPSILANTI, MICHIGAN



Dearest Clarissa,



I'd never had any very own kitchen. Not really. And when we moved to this house four years ago, this one was also "good enough." The flooring wasn't anything I would've picked, but it wasn't atrocious. It was tiled down, and you know how your dad is. If it isn't totally broken, do it the first.

But the table from the former owners took up too much space, and I wanted one that fit. I was dumbfounded when you said you would help me find one. It gave you permission to redo my kitchen. I looked at it only as a functional place, not what it could be. I had to think about it. I'm happy I took a leap at it.

New blue and yellow kitchen that shines in the morning sun! It's a pocketful of pictures and wishes come true. Natural light from the windows and new french doors illuminates my workspace, and the hammock lamp to my very first home brings back many fond memories. I missed the touch from the house I raised you in, and you had the vision to take the vision of one with the windowed cabinet and the crown molding. With every detail, you had me enthralled.

It was without difficulty that I allowed the project to cover the old wood of my kitchen with paint. You kept showing me magazines, and I never knew what you were up to. "How do you like this, Mom?" You kept picking out white cupboards, and that was one of the hardest things for me. I grew up with furniture my great-grandmother had given my mother, so it was always slipping the paint off. You discovered that I would like a country-style kitchen.

I love the most beautiful breakfast bar top, made from a natural oak hard maple, hand-sanded and hand-oiled.



with the backs still on the edges. Anytime you walk by, you reach over and you just have to touch it. I can see little wood splints jumping right out of it. I sat beside it from a newspaper and enjoy a space far beyond the reality that previously just "existed."

One of the gifts was seeing you make my kitchen in front of my eyes. I had the unique opportunity to watch your skills and your marvelous I can do this attitude. Your self-assured confidence is one of your starting traits.

I am so pleased with the results that now surround me every day and your dad loves it too. Despite his vocalized disappointment of "Too much disruption," you completed the project within six weeks! He has noticed it is also his space, and he's thrilled with it. The first time he walked in, he said, "I think we have a Glade Room." It is a most amazing place, but I really glow when you walk in. Clarissa, you are a true treasure.

Love,
Mae
MAE WESTMEYER
CLEVELAND, OHIO

Dear John,



When I closed my eyes, I see those two kids who had only each other and the very 1980s home they never dreamed they would stay in. Now, nearly 12 years later, I can't imagine being anywhere else. Though we never did leave this place, it's been a journey, one seen in every layer of paint and change of floor covering, and I couldn't have taken it without you.

You have taught me so much about how to build things and make them come to life. When we can't find what I want, you make it from scratch. You take a sheet of plywood and create beautiful cabinetry. You slice up a slab of granite and lay a perfect tile floor. After years of preparation, our divided bedrooms, with its walk to wall carpet, powder-pink laminate counters, and never could-go-to-get-it-clean shower, has been transformed into a rejuvenating spa-like retreat. When I look at it, I can't believe how far we have come.

I am amazed at how you seem to

know, and know how to do, everything. From the technical equipment hidden in the walls, like the electrical and heating and HVAC, to the beautiful finishing touches, like the floors, counters, and wainscoting. And you know how it all works together. You don't just think about the bare and at home, either, but what could happen down the road, the hidden panels to access the plumbing or the tub should anything go wrong is just one example of that. Truly, your attention to details is amazing.

Some people hunt and fish and hike, others go to movies and plays and concerts. We remodel our house. That is who we are, who we have grown to become. And through a all, with love, you have taught me so much—so much about building, creating, and finishing, and even more about planning and patience, and, most importantly, how these things apply to life. That is what makes you an amazing husband and father.

You have provided us with a beautiful home and a wonderful life that has surpassed anything I could have imagined.

And you have built this life, as you have built every project we have ever taken on, with your bare hands. You have created a masterpiece from a few pieces of raw material. I could never have walked this journey without you, my best friend, for all you do now, and for all to come, thank you.

Love,
Raffie
RAFFIE WITTELOER
ROSEL, ISRAEL



Does Your House Run Hot and Cold?



How A Split-Zone System Can Help

Split zoning systems allow each room (or space) using an individual indoor air handler to be managed independently from other rooms, providing individualized comfort within each room. So people in different rooms—the kitchen, master bedroom, or living room—can enjoy temperature settings that make each of them most comfortable.

Lower Consumption = Lower Utility Bills

Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) consumes almost half of a home's total energy bill. But you really only live in a few rooms at a time. Why pay to heat or heat the whole house continuously? Mitsubishi Electric's innovative INVERTER driven compressor technology automatically adjusts the system to changing conditions in individual rooms, so you will only use the energy that's needed—no more, no less. It's possible to transform any room in your home into an oasis of comfort, cool and dry in the summer and warm and cozy in the winter.

The Mitsubishi Electric Difference

Older houses have their own unique set of challenges, and the last thing you want to do is start breaking down walls and ceilings to upgrade your HVAC. But ductless options, such as Mitsubishi Electric's Mi-Series, can supplement your existing ducted system. They are contractor installed quickly and easily, versatile to no mess or life disruption. And with multiple indoor unit styles to choose from, such as high-wall-mounted, floor stand (eg. using recessed and ducted designs), there's a unit to fit any application and home style.

For precise temperature control—even in spaces you thought would be impossible to fix—visit mitsubishicomfort.com

Uneven cooling and heating

is a common problem in older houses. Inadequate insulation and window and door leaks are common culprits, but sometimes it is simply a matter of your current system not being able to keep up with your home's cooling and heating demands. Before you consider an expensive overhaul of your entire HVAC system, think about spot-treating your home by installing a zoning ductless system, like Mitsubishi Electric's Mi-Series. Their compact dimensions, restrained design and extra-quiet operation combine to offer the ultimate in room-by-room comfort control.

INDOOR HIGH WALL MOUNTED UNIT



COMPACT AND DISCREET OUTDOOR UNIT



DON'T BEAT YOURSELF UP
OVER ENERGY COSTS.



high-quiet mode

Mitsubishi Electric systems offer efficient individual room control and allergen filtration with no ductwork—so you can be as comfortable as you want anywhere in your home. See the technology that ends the fight at mitsubishicomfort.com



© 2011 Mitsubishi Electric

They sprayed their way to greatness

These clever readers gilded their parlor without blowing their budget

By DEBORAH BALLEW • Photograph by GILLEN NORMAN

How to
fake paper
with paint



Karl and Amy Gelles

BEFORE: VINTAGE
"Not sure if we'll ever redo this on this scale again, but we love it."

Amy and Karl Gelles perfected the art of mixing fine fabrics and hand labor while creating a parlor in their 1879 house. To get a look right out of Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence*, they splurged on \$790 worth of handpainted wallpaper—enough to establish the right tone—and finished the rest with paint, stencils, and elbow grease. The couple began at the *Brooklyn & Bowdoin Art Wallpapers* website, which showed a Victorian-style room with a medley of five wallpapers. Beautiful, Amy says, but "just was not much for one room." So they bought border patterns to flank the crown molding, enough painted paper to create a wainscot, and samples of two star-like patterns. Next stop: Walmart, where they picked up contact paper to line their two baseboards. Karl made plaster stencils by tracing the star-patterned paper, used them to create larger gothic-board stencils, and worked his way across the ceiling and walls, preserving the template with quick-dry adhesive and spraying them with gold paint. "Cutting them out was tedious," he says, "but then the work flew." ■

Tools and materials included wallpaper samples, clear plastic, an X-Acto knife and many cans of spray paint.



PHOTO: ANDY CARROLL; 1. ROBERT V. LANE/SHUTTERSTOCK

If you have an irregular heartbeat called atrial fibrillation, or Afib, not caused by a heart valve problem, **PRADAXA** can reduce your risk of stroke.

• In a clinical trial, **PRADAXA** reduced stroke risk **35% more** than warfarin. This reduction was greatest when compared to patients on warfarin whose blood tests showed lower levels of control.

• Unlike warfarin, no regular blood tests.

Ask your doctor about

Pradaxa
dabigatran etexilate
capsules 150mg

WHAT IS PRADAXA?

Pradaxa® (dabigatran etexilate [mazole]) capsules is a prescription blood-thinning medicine used to reduce the risk of stroke and blood clots in people with atrial fibrillation not caused by a heart valve problem.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION ABOUT PRADAXA

PRADAXA can cause bleeding which can be serious and sometimes lead to death. Don't take PRADAXA if you currently have abnormal bleeding or if you have ever had an allergic reaction to it.

Your risk of bleeding with PRADAXA may be higher if you: are 75 years old or older, have kidney problems, have stomach or intestine bleeding that is recent or keeps coming back or you have a stomach ulcer, take other medicines that increase your risk of bleeding, like aspirin products, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and blood thinners, have kidney problems and take dabigatran (Mozingo) or telicicazole tablets (Nizoral).

Call your doctor or seek immediate medical care if you have any of the following signs or symptoms of bleedings: any unexpected, severe, or uncontrollable bleeding, or bleeding that lasts a long time, unusual or unexpected bruising, coughing up or vomiting blood, or vomit that looks like coffee grounds, pink or brown urine, red or black stools (looks like tar), unexpected pain, swelling, or joint pain, headaches and feeling dizzy or weak.



"With my Afib, I'm glad my daughter had me talk to my doctor again about reducing my stroke risk."



It is important to tell your doctor about all medications, vitamins, and supplements you take. Some of your other medicines may affect the way PRADAXA works.

Take PRADAXA exactly as prescribed by your doctor. Don't stop taking PRADAXA without talking to your doctor as your risk of stroke may increase.

Tell your doctor if you are planning to have any surgery, or medical or dental procedure, because you may have to stop taking PRADAXA for a short time.

PRADAXA can cause indigestion, stomach upset or burning, and stomach pain.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Please see more detailed Medication Guide on next page.

Pradaxa
dabigatran etexilate
capsules 150mg

For more information or help paying for your medication, call 1-877-PRADAXA or visit pradaxa.com



For hourly trials and tips for caregivers, scan here for pradaxa.com/caregiver

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Read this Medication Guide before you start taking PRADAXA, and each time you get a refill. There may be new information. This Medication Guide does not take the place of talking with your doctor about your medical condition or your treatment.

What is the most important information I should know about PRADAXA?

- PRADAXA can cause bleeding which can be serious, and sometimes lead to death. This is because PRADAXA is a blood thinner medicine that lowers the chance of blood clots forming in your body.
- You may have a higher risk of bleeding if you take PRADAXA and:
 - are over 75 years old
 - have kidney problems
 - have stomach or intestinal bleeding that is recurrent or keeps coming back, or you have a stomach ulcer
 - take other medicines that increase your risk of bleeding, including:
 - aspirin or aspirin containing products
 - long-term (chronic) use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)
 - warfarin product (Coumadin®; Jantoven®)
 - a medicine that contains heparin
 - clopidogrel (Plavix®)
 - prasugrel (Effient®)
 - have certain kidney problems and also take the medicines tramadol (Ultram®) or hydrocodone tablets (Vicodin®).

Tell your doctor if you take any of these medicines. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure if your medicine is one listed above.

- PRADAXA can increase your risk of bleeding because it lessens the ability of your blood to clot. While you take PRADAXA,
 - you may bruise more easily
 - it may take longer for any bleeding to stop

Get your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of these signs or symptoms of bleeding:

- unexpected bleeding or bleeding that lasts a long time, such as:
 - unusual bleeding from the gums
 - nose bleeds that happen often
 - menstrual bleeding or vaginal bleeding that is heavier than normal
- bleeding that causes or you cannot control
- pink or brown urine
- red or black stools (looks like tar)

PRADAXA (sodium PRADAXA (sodium) (sodium) (sodium) (sodium) capsules)

- bruises that happen without a known cause or get larger
- cough up blood or blood clots
- vomit blood or your vomit looks like "coffee grounds"
- unexpected pain, swelling, or joint pain
- headaches, feeling dizzy or weak
- Take PRADAXA exactly as prescribed. Do not stop taking PRADAXA without first talking to the doctor who prescribed it for you. Stopping PRADAXA may increase your risk of a stroke.

PRADAXA may need to be stopped, if possible, for one or more days before any surgery, or medical or dental procedure if you need to stop taking PRADAXA for any reason, talk to the doctor who prescribed PRADAXA for you to find out when you should stop taking it. Your doctor will tell you when to start taking PRADAXA again after your surgery or procedure.

See "What are the possible side effects of PRADAXA?" for more information about side effects.

What is PRADAXA?
PRADAXA is a prescription medicine used to reduce the risk of stroke and blood clots in people who have a medical condition called atrial fibrillation (AF) with atrial fibrillation, part of the heart does not beat the way it should. This can lead to blood clots forming and increase your risk of a stroke. PRADAXA is a blood thinner medicine that lowers the chance of blood clots forming in your body.

It is not known if PRADAXA is safe and works in children.

What should not take PRADAXA?

- Do not take PRADAXA if you:
 - currently have certain types of abnormal bleeding. Talk to your doctor before taking PRADAXA if you currently have unusual bleeding.
 - have had a serious allergic reaction to PRADAXA. Ask your doctor if you are not sure.

What should I tell my doctor before taking PRADAXA?

- Before you take PRADAXA, tell your doctor if you:
 - have kidney problems
 - have ever had bleeding problems
 - have ever had stomach ulcers
 - have any other medical condition
 - are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if PRADAXA will harm your unborn baby
 - are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. It is not known if PRADAXA passes into your breast milk.

Tell all of your doctors and dentists that you are taking PRADAXA.

They should talk to the doctor who prescribed PRADAXA for you, before you have any surgery, or medical or dental procedure.

Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take, including prescription and non-prescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Some of your other medicines may affect the way PRADAXA works. Certain medicines may increase your risk of bleeding. See "What is the most important information I should know about PRADAXA?"

Especially tell your doctor if you take

- ritonavir (Atrivir), zalcitabine, zalcitabine, (Retrovir)

Know the medicines you take. Keep a list of them and show it to your doctor and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.

How should I take PRADAXA?

- Take PRADAXA exactly as prescribed by your doctor.
- Do not take PRADAXA more often than your doctor tells you to.
- You can take PRADAXA with or without food.
- PRADAXA comes in a bottle or in a blister package.
- Only open 1 bottle of PRADAXA at a time. Finish your opened bottle of PRADAXA before opening a new bottle.
- After opening a bottle of PRADAXA, use within 4 months. See "How should I store PRADAXA?"
- When it is time for you to take a dose of PRADAXA, only remove your prescribed dose of PRADAXA from your open bottle or blister package.
- Typically, dose your bottle of PRADAXA right away after you take your dose.
- Swallow PRADAXA capsules whole. Do not break, chew, or empty the pellets from the capsule.
- If you miss a dose of PRADAXA, take it as soon as you remember. If your next dose is less than 6 hours away, skip the missed dose. Do not take two doses of PRADAXA at the same time.
- Your doctor will decide how long you should take PRADAXA. Do not stop taking PRADAXA without first talking with your doctor. Stopping PRADAXA may increase your risk of stroke.
- Do not run out of PRADAXA. Refill your prescription before you run out. If you plan to have surgery, or a medical or a dental procedure,

tell your doctor and dentist that you are taking PRADAXA. You may have to stop taking PRADAXA for a short time. See "What is the most important information I should know about PRADAXA?"

- If you take too much PRADAXA, go to the nearest hospital emergency room or call your doctor.
- Call your healthcare provider right away if you fall or injure yourself, especially if you tell your head. Your healthcare provider may need to check you.
- What are the possible side effects of PRADAXA?

- PRADAXA can cause serious side effects.
 - See "What is the most important information I should know about PRADAXA?"
 - Allergic reactions. In some people, PRADAXA can cause symptoms of an allergic reaction, including hives, rash and itching. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you get any of the following symptoms of a serious allergic reaction with PRADAXA:
 - swelling of your face or tongue
 - trouble breathing or wheezing
 - feeling dizzy or faint

Common side effects of PRADAXA include:

- indigestion, upset stomach, or burning
- stomach pain

Tell your doctor if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

There are not all of the possible side effects of PRADAXA. For more information, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

How should I store PRADAXA?

- Store PRADAXA at room temperature between 59°F to 86°F (15°C to 30°C). After opening the bottle, use PRADAXA within 4 months. Safely throw away any unused PRADAXA after 4 months.
- Keep PRADAXA in the original bottle or blister package to keep it dry (prevent the capsules from becoming wet). Do not put PRADAXA in pill boxes or pill organizers.
- Tightly close your bottle of PRADAXA right away after you take your dose.

Keep PRADAXA and all medicines out of the reach of children.

General information about PRADAXA

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in a Medication Guide. Do not use PRADAXA for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give your PRADAXA to other people, even if they have the same symptoms. It may harm them.

This Medication Guide summarizes the most important information about PRADAXA. If you would like more information, talk with your doctor. You can ask your pharmacist or doctor for information about PRADAXA that is written for health professionals.

For more information, go to www.PRADAXA.com or call 1-800-542-6257 or (TTY) 1-800-459-6906.

What are the ingredients in PRADAXA?

Active ingredients: dabigatran etexilate mesylate

Inactive ingredients: silica, dimethylsiloxane, hydroxypropyl cellulose, PEG, and butyric acid. The capsule shell is composed of croscarmellose, FD&C Blue No. 2 (152mg strength only), FD&C Yellow No. 6, hypromellose, polyethylene glycol, titanium dioxide, and black edible ink.

This Medication Guide has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Medication Guide for PRADAXA (sodium) (sodium) (sodium) (sodium) capsules
PRADAXA, Inc.
Bridgewater, NJ 08807



PRADAXA (sodium) (sodium) (sodium) (sodium) capsules
PRADAXA, Inc.
Bridgewater, NJ 08807

The above information does not contain all of the information needed to use PRADAXA safely and effectively. See the additional information provided in the Patient Information Leaflet (PIL) that comes with your medicine.

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PRADAXA, Inc.

Did you miss TOH on TV this week?

No problem! Now you can watch full episodes whenever, wherever you want



The Old House theoldhouse.com/watchTOH

Ask This Old House thisoldhouse.com/watchAskTOH

Watch an entire project from start to finish



And the winner is... the cabinet-door coffee table

You voted with your thumbs. And lucky for me, most of those thumbs endorsed the coffee table idea. I'd been without one since my ladder took her first steps. Now that she's steady on her feet, I needed a replacement for the fragile glass table I'd given up. Plus, it's perfect for my kid-friendly furnishing strategy: The door is already banged up, so what more damage could be done? And there aren't any sharp corners for my little one to bend her head on.

I thought was tempted to cover the recessed panels with Plexiglas to level the surface, but then I was, preferring to treat the rectangles as individual trays. Prefab steel table legs (\$42 for the pair, michellejane.com) made assembly quick and easy. The lower shelf is actually leftover tongue-and-groove flooring that I had in the workshop. So, except for the legs and fasteners, this coffee table was practically free. Follow along to see how it came together.

**2016 THE
CUTTING
EDGE**
"Use" Salvage Style
Facebook to get
and share more
inspiration.



Cost \$45 for the lagged screws. The door for the top and the flooring for the shelf were free.
Time 1 hour
Skills **DIY** Easy. A few power jobs requiring only basic tools.

STEP-BY-STEP

1 Prep the door. Use a cat's paw to gently remove any protruding nails. If your door has an astragal (shown, a trim piece to hide the gap between a pair of cabinet doors), pry it off to level the surface.



5 Determine the shelf size. Fit together two tongue-and-groove floorboards. Measure and mark the width of the shelf bracket (12 inches) on the backs. The shelf should be shorter than the table top to give it a recessed look.

2 Determine the table-leg locations. Flip the door facedown, and measure where the legs will go: 6 to 8 inches in from the ends. With the legs in place, mark the screw holes.



6 Cut the shelf board. Clamp the boards to a work surface, and use a circular saw to remove the exposed tongue or groove and rip the boards to the correct width. Now cut them to length.

3 Bore pilot holes for the screws. The screw length should be slightly shorter than the door's thickness. I used 1/4-inch wood screws. To keep from drilling all the way through the wood, wrap tape around the drill bit to serve as a depth gauge.



4 Secure the table legs. Steady them in place and drive in the screws.



8 Complete the coffee table by applying a protective top coat. To help seal the wood and impart a soft matte sheen, rub on a natural wax-based conditioner. Reapply periodically to prevent drying and keep the table looking its best. ■



putting
your pouch in
its proper
place

They did it for the dogs

These readers' unique kitchen renovation accommodates the true masters of the house: their beloved canine companions. BY AMANDA BUSTILLON



Only Storage: Shows a list with Name, Location, and a list of files with size. Privately features, the list is also hidden with the new cloud

Kelly and Matt Francy
HIGH-AND-TERMINAL CHIEF

"I spend a lot of time in my kitchen. Now my dogs are as comfortable in here as I am."

Four-legged family members can't tell us in words how to improve a noose, but for *Thru Old House* readers, they can be a major influence in a renovation. Just ask Kelly and Matt Feeney, who recently transformed the kitchen of their old farmhouse into a pup-friendly hangout—dinner scraps not included.

learns on reclaiming a kitchen overtaken by space-hogging kennels for dogs Miley, Vero, Lyla, and Betty, the Francops reworked the layout to include a generous island with a crate tucked discreetly beneath the countertop. "We built the 'dog den' mainly to contain Lyla, since she chews every thing," Kelly says. "But all the dogs like spending time there because it's cozy, dim, and serene."

The Franks also added other amenities to make living with their breed exact. The new porcelain tile floor is easy to clean and won't get scratched by the dogs' nails, and a cooling rack built into the wall cabinet keeps fresh-baked cookies out of paw's reach. They have plans to improve the "den" by adding a sliding wood-and-metal entry door that they'll paint to match the island. "We want their home to look seamless with our space," says Kelly. Now, clearly the dogs could build the door.



I AM an old pro.
Age can't make me retire.

Play young, stay young with new Iams Senior Plus.

A dog's immune system may weaken with age, but we even keep dogs 71 and older playing strong with this new life stage formula. It helps restore the immune response to that of a healthy adult dog and helps fight signs of aging. See the large difference or your money back.*

I am an Iams dog for life.



**all for
the love
of Fido**
Many readers
want us to provide



Patrick and
Kate Sharples
ALABAMA
CLASSICAL

Many readers sent us projects they did for their page. Here are a couple of other favorites. —



**Richard and
Joanne Wilbury**
OWNERS FERRY
SLAND

"We built a courtyard for our 1830s house that the whole family uses, but our dogs, Cooper and Ina, really love to relax on Deek. When we come home from work and see them looking at the back, we feel like family at home."

“After trying to visit the work Ziva, our boyfriend broke finally into creating a dedicated room for bathing and feeding her and our second dog, Ziva, didn’t I could not enjoy ‘They even enjoy sleeping in their new house!’”



How to save a buck (or even less!) at any cost

From foraging for pebbles to adopting goats, this year's inductees to our elite club of masters set new standards of tightfistedness. *Illustration by JACOB DAVIS*

What this class of characters didn't spend: \$50,762.92

Cheap Feat: Separating the plaster from the lath



Kaitlyn Kiewit
HORSEHEAD, NEW YORK
I've been referred to as "Cheap O' The

Cheaper" and, as "Lemon" from *Seinfeld* and Sam for my tendency to scour bargain racks and pickup things from the table of the road. So my wife was sure I belonged in this year's Hall. Here's one good reason why she's right: When removing lath and plaster I chipped the plaster and took it to the dump, but the lath I kept. Not only does it reduce my (already low) overage charges at the dump, but I can also reuse the lath in countless ways as turning strips, lattice, and landing for perfectly dry borders out back. I also use it to make up raggy flyknives and conflowers in the garden.

What Kaitlyn Saved: Up to \$50 each trip

Cheap Feat: Fabricating faux-granite countertops



Angel Elder
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA
I needed to update my kitchen, but I couldn't afford my dream countertop because I have a custom configuration. Then I remembered how a friend had covered her counters in fabric, and off she still kept smiling. After giving it to just about every table in store, I found a pattern that looks like granite and had my friend help me glue it down. Three custom all-fabric polyurethane tops and I had a wonderful new look for my kitchen.

What Angel Saved: \$3,276



Cheap Feat: Harvesting solar rays—for night-lights

Barb Wagner PENSACOLA, FLORIDA

My husband Fred believes in saving energy whenever he can. So, every morning he sets a plastic crate outside with half a dozen or so solar landscape lights to soak up our Florida sunshine. At dusk he brings them in and puts them around the house in vases, or even just in corners, giving us free night lights. I don't know how much energy regular night lights use, but every little bit counts.

What the Wagners Save: \$6 a month

Cheap Feat: Salvaging fruit crates for fruit of the Looney



Barbara Myers
GASSANAW, WEST VIRGINIA
I work at the local grocery store and

occasionally bring home those wood produce crates. After watching them pile up, my husband decided to get creative. He built what we both lovingly refer to as a "redneck chest of drawers." We use them for storing clothes, but they would also make great crates of potato drawers.

What the Myerses Saved: \$15

Cheap Feat: Making the most of foam packaging



Joe Rutan
CINCINNATI, OHIO
I saved the foam packaging that comes with shoe orders out of it up and used it instead of buying foam brushes. It works with paint or stain, and it's especially handy for spreading woodworking glue or drawing chalk lines. And I never feel guilty about throwing it away!

What Joe Saved: \$7 each per brush

Cheap Feat: Remodeling with plexiglass and spray paint



Kevin Kaefer
INDEPENDENCE, OHIO
Our big money-saving idea was to be creative in our

kitchen. I cut sheets of plexiglass to size, including holes for the wall outlets. I then painted the back of each sheet white and stuck them to a patch of color and attached the



Cheap Feat: Sending the kids dumpster diving

John Jemel ADEL, OHIO

When we built our house two years ago, my kids loved getting in the builder's dumpster and putting out all the unused materials that ended up there. We paid for the shift, after all, so why let it go to waste? Thanks to their hard work, I was able to build shelves in the garage and basement using only "reclaimed" plywood and 2x4s.

What John Saved: \$400

Cheap Feat: Boosting thermal efficiency with Bubble Wrap



Mike Kovac
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI
I cut Bubble Wrap to the size of my window

panes, sprayed water on the latex, and sprayed the window glass. It's easier to put up and take down than those shrink-wrap window kits and, of course, cheaper, too. Important: Use electric caulkers to cut the Bubble Wrap straight.

What Mike Saved: \$2.60 per window

Cheap Feat: Scrounging stone



Rick Rejztor
SYRACUSE, NEW YORK
We wanted our new bathroom to have that spa-like feel, including

a pebble floor spilling over from the shower. Have you poked out pebbles floating lazily in the pool? I decided that would be a better price. We went out early on road trips, visiting different cranks and other bodies of water, but came up with nothing at first. Finally, we heard about a lake with stones lined up and down with exactly what we were looking for. They are the most perfect pebbles. After paying for a stone, I'd get it on a stick, pull it up, and use a stick to pull it out. And a little more for a sport taking each pebble by hand, and—voilà!—a spa was born.

What Rick Saved: \$1,300

Cheap Feet: Decorating with joint compound



Janene Beagh
STILLFORK, ALABAMA
My husband and I have been renovating our kitchen for what feels like forever. This year it takes the more money! coin. We wanted something unusual on the wall but wanted it to be as cheap as possible. We had some drywall mud left over and decided to use it to create a stone effect. My hubby took a putty knife and spread the mud on the wall in random stone shapes, leaving spaces between where the "mortar" would go. Once the wall was dry, we used glass in a variety of shades to add color and texture. The finished look was costing the

will with polyurethane to seal it.
What the Budget Saved: \$400 in tile

Cheap Feet: Using masking tape as an architectural detail



Curtis Steffert
COLUMBIA, MISSOURI
I was reading about Craftsman-style homes and didn't want to spend any money on buying it up, but the front window's lack of detail had started driving me nuts. I then robbing the house of its architectural integrity. My cheapiekat fix was to make muntins out of masking tape, creating the look of separate panes.
What Curtis Saved: \$300 for an architecturally appropriate new window

Cheap Feet: Making 20 minutes for a hot shower



Leslie Privette
HERRIN, ILLINOIS
My husband, Jacob, installed switches on each of our hot electric water heaters. We turn them off after taking showers, doing laundry, washing dishes, and then 20 minutes before we need hot water, we go and turn them back on. A little forethought makes a big difference in our electric bill.
What the Privettes Save: \$30 a month

Cheap Feet: Asking the big money question



Lisa Nelson-Woods
COLUMBUS, OHIO
I felt you have to save money. Use the magic words. Since you're throwing out our car, how about? Paid free stuff that, with a little DIY love, can save into something great. I landscaped my front yard and front porch for under \$500 last summer. I got porch chairs, benches for the raised bed, and vegetable seeds and transplants for the garden, all by asking. But the best part of our DIY cheapiekat garden was ending what it produced.
What Lisa Saved: \$3,011.38

Cheap Feet: Taking a roomier penicillin...with penicillin



Cynthia Ransom
TULSA, OKLAHOMA
We picked up 44 square feet of flooring for the biggest bathroom at some plumbing, but could find any 60-square-foot search we tried that was rich, period. Instead, we tried one of those big bags of penicillin like everyone does, so that savings buying life. Problems, we didn't have our enough so I had to go buy about \$70 worth of extra penicillin.
What Cynthia Saved: \$247.4

Cheap Feet: Getting goats to do the dirty work

Myrielle SANTA ROSA, CALIFORNIA
When we first moved into our home, we were walk-high in poison oak. It was impossible to find anyone willing to clear it, and we're terribly allergic. After a while, we got sick and got some goats—free off Craigslist—which supposedly love it so much that they pull it out by the roots. When we got their horns, however, Elmer and Scooter were kind of skakkers. To get them interested, we had to handpick and hand feed them after covering ourselves head-to-toe in mineral oil and clothing. It worked. Pouch can show their favorite entree.
What the Lees Save: Untold thousands in trips to the ER



seeing is believing
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This Old House
HOME

weekend
remodel

A place for dreams... and all your other stuff

This reader-inspired bed contains 23 cubic feet of storage but no room for dust bunnies. BY ERIC HADENBAUM • Photography by LAUREA MOORE



John Klei

GORDONSVILLE, VIRGINIA

"I cut out the picture of the bed and put it in my workshop. It's been on my to-do list ever since."



2. Assemble the platform

A. Dry-fit the carcasses. Arrange the three carcasses so they will be assembled and clamped together at the feet. Measure the long-hand width of the void between the carcasses, as shown. Uncut them and prime all surfaces.

B. Join the carcasses. Grab a partner and move the carcasses into the bedroom. Place them on 4x2 furring strips so that the bottom rails will be flush with the storage openings, and clamp them back together. Using 1 1/2-inch MDF screws, go through the web of the small carcasses and into the adjustments, as shown.

C. Install the 2x4 support frame. Use a miter saw to cut 2x4s to length to build a support frame for the void between the carcasses. Use deck screws to go through the long boards into the ends of the low carcasses. Install 1x2 cleats around the platform opening, 3/8 inches down to hold the frame flush with the platform, and set the hangers in place, as shown. Use 2-inch-MDF screws to fasten to the carcasses, lying together the entire assembly.



2

they're crafty
It's not our
furniture built in
projects from
this issue's
Project Remodel
contest. Join
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and #TODU



3. Make the bed frame

A. Cut the MDF bed frame pieces. Use a straight knife and a circular saw to cut the side panels and footboard to size. These panels overlap the footboard and will butt into the headboard in Step 3C.

B. Install the panels. Run a bead of wood glue along the perimeter of the top of the platform, and set the headboard in place. Place each panel edge in the glue, and screw it in place, as shown. Check that the box is square and flush with the platform. Insert pilot holes at the edge of the storage bays, and install 2x4-inch-MDF screws. Screw through the side panels and into the edges of the footboards, too.

C. Attach the headboard. Measure the width of the bed, and cut the headboard to size. Use 1 1/2-inch-MDF screws to attach it to the carcasses and the 2x4 support frame. Don't use glue if you ever plan to move the bed.

3



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4



4. Install the trim

A. Install the face frames. For the best fit, measure and cut the 1x2 trim to size. Starting with the top and bottom rails on the sides, glue them in place, then use a blind nailer to tack them down. Measure, cut, and install the top and bottom rails at the head of the bed. Nail up all the slats to install the recite rails, too.

B. Install the cap trim. Set a miter square 45 degrees around the footboard ends of the bed (2 pieces) and cap the sides. Measure and cut the other end at 90 degrees. Glue and nail the side caps in place. Next, measure for the footboard cap, set the saw back to 45 degrees, and miter both ends of the cap to fit. Glue and nail it in place.

C. Install the headboard trim. Glue and tack the cap trim in place at the corners. Measure the distance between each one and the platform, and cut the door casing to length. Use a glue-on or a Japanese hand saw to finish the casings around the side panels, and glue and nail them in place with a cord miter. Then install the horizontal piece of casing between the casings. Finally, cut a 1x3 strip to fit between the platform and the horizontal casing, center it on the side, and glue and nail it in place.

see how it's done

To watch a video of this project, scan this code with your smartphone. Daily Remodeler: Issue 100002



5

5. Dress it up

A. Install the paneling. Cut pieces of beadboard panel to fit into the two halves of the headboard. Use construction adhesive to affix them, and tack them down with a brad nailer. Do the same for all the areas of the face frames with exposed ends.

B. Add the finishing touches. Use a miter saw to cut three molding for each side, straight at the headboard and at a 45-degree angle at the footboard end. Use a brad nailer to tuck the shoe in place. Measure, cut, and install the footboard piece in a corner. Fill any nail holes, then sand and paint the bed. Before you know it, it'll be time to hit the hay.



More dreamy bed designs

John Klee isn't the only reader keen on storage beds. Here are our three favorite projects selected from this year's Reader Remodel Contest.



Double-decker bunk room

"My sister and I have four kids between us, and we wanted a place for them all in one room. We used 4x4s for the corners, extra kitchen cabinets for the bases, plywood for the platforms, and old spice racks for the bookshelves between the two bottom bunks. The kids love the privacy and the fact that everyone has his or her own reading light!"

—**Dawn Shelton**, PORTLAND, OREGON



A porch for each giraffe

My husband and I were looking for a way to put two boys, ages 13 and 7, in a room and give them their own space without having to fill it up with formal furniture. The headboards are framed out of 2x4s and the storage bins are MDF. We made the storage bins from scrap fence slats. The wooden bench is a dresser we bought for \$45 and built in.

—**Kendra and Les Ruppel**, MAGNA, UTAH



Every toy in its right place

Putting all the storage again at one end really saved us our son's room for fun today. My husband made the platform and drawers out of heavy MDF and the bookshelves from plywood. He cut the drawer fronts from a single 1x10 pine board that we liked. The bed has secret compartments, and our son loves that he can organize all his toys!"

—**James and Brandee Koker**

ARAPAHOE, TEXAS



"I used to walk by and feel sorry for this house. Little did I know that we would be the ones to fix it up and how it would change our lives."

—Kristen Wolf MEQUISON WISCONSIN

"Not sure how long I'll be here, because I am in the military, but I wanted my family to have a cozy kitchen." —Jason Buzzard SYRACUSE NEW YORK

"We did at least 85% of the remodel ourselves—date night!"

—Marc and Karin Jreskeberg YANKTON SOUTH DAKOTA

2012

READER REMODEL CONTEST

IN YOUR WORDS

"I pinched a nerve in my neck tearing up layers of flooring and had to sleep sitting up in the living room for a while. Well worth it in the end!"

—Andrea Hoy
WILLIAMSVILLE NEW YORK

"THE HOLY
KITCHEN
TRINITY:
COPPER,
GRANITE,
SLATE"

—Leo
Chavez Jr.
DENVER
COLORADO

"I am a female in my late 50s. I own more power tools than most men ever dreamed of and know how to use them."

—Christine Bodie WEST LEBERTY OHIO

"The hardest part was the inconvenience of sewer backups and having people try to come and buy drugs from what was a former crack house!"

—Art Dykstra ST PETERSBURG FLORIDA

"My awesome neighbor did all of the work."

—Jeri Raic
PITTSBURGH PENNSYLVANIA

"Our contractor eventually reran our pipes so we could wash up underneath the deck. Nothing like seeing your dog go to the bathroom on the lawn while you are taking a shower."

—Kristin Johnson PASADENA CALIFORNIA

THE HARDEST PART:
"Creating and compromising on the design with my wife. And waiting for Spackle and paint to dry."

—James Gould
HAMILTON NEW JERSEY

"The best part was dreaming about what the new bedroom would be like. Of course, many of my dreams were crushed by reality. But I still have the notebooks."

—Sandy
De Laughter
HARRISON VIRGINIA

"We originally wanted to build a house, had a blueprint drawn up and everything, but then we figured we had already invested so much in the trailer that we couldn't see just giving it up. So we fixed it up."

—Amy Reynolds
HARRELL ARKANSAS

"I lived there during construction and befriended my Shop-Vac every day."

—Andrew Dirks BROOKFIELD WISCONSIN

"I knew the 99-year-old lady who lived in this 165-year-old house as a young bride and for the next 70 years of her life. I wanted to return it to the way she remembered it."

—Kris Charles DEXTER CITY OHIO

"Responses from friends and family have ranged from 'You are nuts!' to 'That is incredible!' I agree."

—Adam Mohring STOUTSTON WISCONSIN

"Our house sits on a rise overlooking the Wild and Scenic Little Beaver Creek. Great site for high water, not so great for getting materials uphill to the house. Everything had to be carried up by us. Now my husband and I have great calf muscles! We plan on doing a lot of landscaping using the same."

—Donna and Dan Gurnette
EAST LIVERPOOL OHIO

TOH READER REMODEL CONTEST
GRAND-PRIZE WINNER:

"Had the Department of Health gotten wind of what was inside, this place would have been condemned."

—Mark Wallacavage PHILADELPHIA PENNSYLVANIA

For more on the harrowing story of Mark's remodel, turn the page



**THE 2012 TOH READER
REMODEL CONTEST**

MEET OUR
GRAND-PRIZE
WINNERS

**THEY GOT \$5,000 AND
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AMERICA'S
MOST
INSPIRING
REMODEL

THE WALLACAVE FAMILY RELIED ON GUTS, A STRONG CONSTITUTION, AND A HEFTY DOSE OF HOPE TO TURN AN 1895 TUDOR ON THE VERGE OF BEING CONDEMNED INTO THEIR DREAM HOME



BEFORE It took seven strong men armed with pitchforks to clear five dumpsters worth of garbage out of the house.



The Wall-to-wall plans (TOP LEFT) show how Mark, Mike, Nathaniel, Ed and Jimmy's kitchen had to be gutted to solve their plumbing problems (see home from trash heap (BEFORE) on p. 14). In addition, Jimmy's most impressive details are the restored fireplace mantel and mosaic tile fireplace (BOTTOM).

I had been saying by this old Tudor every day for years. Call me a stalker, but I was looking for a sign. Then one day, I got one: A small mulberry tree had sprouted from the roof. It was like a hand waving and saying, *Come check this out, there's something going on here.*

That something was neglect. And in it I saw an opportunity to have a bigger house for my growing family in a neighborhood I'd always loved—the historic Overbrook Farm section of Philadelphia.

I started leaving notes for the owner on the front door, which was jammed open with dried mulch and leaves. After months with no reply, I got up the courage to enter the house. I pushed the door all the way open, and all I could see was garbage. It covered every surface. There was no power, no water, no one around—just flies circling and stray cats scurrying.

The stench naturally turned me back, but I stood my ground. As an ICU nurse, I have strong stomachs. More important, I knew the 1935 house was designed by one of my favorite architects, William L. Price, and I couldn't help but think this might be my only chance to get my hands on one of his great buildings.

A jumble of furniture and soggy boxes blocked access to the first-floor rooms, so I started up the stairs—carefully, though, because something undesirable was coming down them. At the top of the landing I found the only bathroom and the source of the noise. The room was one big litter box, with a thick crust of cat feces on the floor and filling the tub and sink.

The bedrooms down the hall were a mass of soiled clothing, discarded water jugs, and more piled-up furniture. So I'd been again, on the third floor. There, in a front room, I got my first peek at the floorboards. They were heavy-boned hewn pine, and they hinted at the rich potential in what was otherwise a 3,400-square-foot nightmare of tightly gloed, together-falls. Had the health department given word of what I was seeing, the house would have been condemned. And I couldn't let that happen. When I found out it was going into a sheriff's sale because of back property taxes, I tracked down the owner and negotiated a way to buy the house from her, saving it by the skin of my teeth. That was May of 2008.

Now—five years, five dumpsters, 800 contractors



hops, and countless hours of gut-wrenching work later—the house shows a dream house to me, my wife, Kate, and our four children: Isabel, 8, Gabriel, 5, Zosiah, 4, and the baby, Nathaniel, 9 months. The two older kids were moved from the beginning of the project, but it wasn't until midway through the renovation that Kate and I got the call from the adoption agency that our third child, Zosiah, who was then 19 months old, was waiting for us in Ethiopia. With my obvious focus on the house, it was Kate who had worked so hard for the adoption. And though we were overjoyed with the news, the timing couldn't have been worse.

Our contractor had just abandoned the project, taking with him thousands of dollars earmarked for construction materials and leaving us with gaping holes in the bathroom. You could see right through it from the first floor to the third. So with the little bit of money we had scraped together to hire another pro to fix the bath, we instead bought our plane tickets to Africa.

Upon our return, I did the bathroom myself using fixtures and finishes that people had donated, including a vintage claw-foot tub and pedestal sink from my mother's house and marble mosaic floor tiles from a gin crewer in Chicago, who had them left over from a job. It isn't perfect, but it works well for us. And having my daughter Zosiah is so much better than a professionally installed bathroom. No question about it.



Now where, garden, and an ornate chandelier had transformed the exterior from the spruce on the back to a showpiece. (LEFT) Shaded beneath wisteria deep into the dining room was this matching set of tables and chairs, as well as two china cupboards, which Mark's mother painstakingly preserved.



On way to the perfect fit

Freshly placed in the pale yellow walls, the white peach color gives the place a warm, welcoming feel. But it's the natural light that streams through the restored one-over-one wood windows that Mark and Katie love most about the room. In the evenings, they rely on light from the Gothic-style wrought-iron chandelier and sconces that Mark bought at an antique



see how they did it!

For under \$400 of our grand prize winners' home, visit this site with your smartphone or go to the house.com site.



Off the beaten floor (and **BOTTOM RIGHT**) are the temporary kitchen (**ABOVE**) assembled from second-hand materials, and the home's only bathroom (**RIGHT**). Also is single-handedly turned five walls from a shoddy cast-iron box into a charming retreat, featuring beadboard walls and a recessed medicine cabinet.

When people ask how we've come this far with the house on just my mom's salary, I say that family, friends, and good laughter are worth their weight in gold. Sure, I pulled myself out of bed at 4 a.m. each day before my shift to do plumbing, lay drywall, and some, sleep, and sand just about every inch of wood in this place. But if it weren't for those folks, we wouldn't be living here today.

When we were struggling to scrape together the \$107,000 to pay off the numerous liens and get the deed, my brother stepped in with a \$60,000 loan, emergency: his own home to help us buy ours. And when it came time for the massive cleanup, Jacob—brother, pig farmer, all-around hero—donned a mask and grabbed a pitchfork to take alongside me.

All my helpers, including a few skilled tradesmen, worked far past midnight. There was Ben, my skate-board buddy and the owner of a hardwood flooring company, who refinished the lower pine floors and showed me how to use my own steam for the staircase and much of the home's trim. And Ed, a master painter and fellow off-house man from the neighborhood, who showed me of the crumbling plaster walls and taught me how to replace all the windows rather than replace them. Inevitably, I'd even had one driving around on each day in search of old windows to convert to. And there was Chris, an electrician who'd just moved in across the street, liked him on a day car, and the two of us wired the entire house.

But my biggest supporter was Katie. She had complete faith in me about this house, even though she didn't step foot inside until after we bought it. She likes to say that it was my vision and her trust, but the truth is, she was my saving grace. The calm to my crazy, Katie kept



The third floor is where the fun—and the learning—happens. In addition to a giant bathroom and space for a future second bath are the hand room (HOLERS) and the classroom (GIFT), where Katie leads lessons for the kids. The divided right easement windows on the bedroom wall are original to the period window unit in the dormer.

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our family together. To help cover the bills, she sold used textbooks and picked up odd jobs, all while caring for and homeschooling our kids.

Katie gets credit for the paint colors, too. She and my mother-in-law picked them out. I love the way the battery but in the foyer brightens the space. It's the perfect complement to the green in the dining room and the peach on the parlor walls. One of the best things about the house is the layout, which is mostly unchanged from the architect's original plans, and the colors really highlight how great the flow is, room to room.

Next on my to-do list is the kitchen, which I'm dying to build in a large room off the main entry but. The one we have now is temporary. After 15 months of renovation with no place to pop open, I pitched it together a few days a week using appliances and IKEA cabinets that I got on Craigslist for \$1,000. It's in a bedroom on the second floor, adjacent to the bath, which allowed me to up into eating, planning and waste lines. We've made a cherry web headboard on the walls, and having it has served us as a saloon. But Katie's been drawing of a big family kitchen with easy access to the outdoors and an island in the center with seating for the kids to gather around. I want to make it happen for her—for all of us.

Thinking back to all that garbage, the crowded construction, those 4 a.m. wake-ups, an international adoption, a new baby—man, I think we've earned it. What a ride! Next stop: Dream kitchen. ■



The entry porch boasts gray stone pillars, a hanging lantern and a picnic table that looks and feels like it's been there for just \$200.

ONE-ROOM WONDERS

What do you have to do to win \$1,000? The same thing that these readers did on their five fabulously focused makeovers: Knock our socks off.

PLUS:
THE MOXIE
AWARDS.
PLUCKIER
THAN EVER



before

LEFT: Readers Al and Marcia Holstein, with grandson Max (14 in photo), used a sunny island of savings and sweat equity to redo their kitchen (LEFTOVER).



WHAT THEY'VE GIVEN THEIR TIRED KITCHEN A FRESH NEW LOOK, COMPLETE WITH DIY CABINET AND DRAWER FRONTS, IN UNDER SIX WEEKS. OH, AND THEY SPENT LESS THAN \$8,300.

THEIR STORY When we descended to our 1955 brick rambler, Marcia and I had already renovated eight bachelors and figured we'd have to redo this one, too. It had 24-year-old oak cabinets with doors falling off their hinges. It also had a lot going for it, though, including a great fridge, a nice hood with a heat lamp and a 10-inch duct, and Corian countertops as well



were they looked like home. Aside from new flooring and a couple of appliance upgrades, what we needed was a new look. Merco found just the thing: elegant silver-gray cabinets in the Home Artistry line from the German luxury brand Selma. Then she discovered the price, and we had to scratch the idea. Who spends \$75,000 on cabinets? Not us.

We were still thinking through what to do when Merco, for some reason, agreed to put our house on the town's annual holiday tour. At that point we figured we could simply paint the cabinets and we'd be ready for company. Just after watching her play around with paint to hide the gaps and try various paint colors, I finally said, "In this amount of time, I could make new doors!" Well, she took me at my word and whipped the old ones out to the curb.

With six weeks all the time, we set up two assembly lines. I made the doors and drawer fronts from paper and stock molding, and Merco painted them—45 doors and 26 drawer fronts, in six steps. I used 1/2-inch plyglass to make one pair of doors, which we "framed" with an angled product, and to make inserts for some open shelves, to let the light shine through.

Merco drove all over northern Virginia looking for someone who could match her gray before she heard about this Fine Paints of Europe guy who'd been naming paints for decades. Still, it took him 90 minutes to get a match. Later, when she returned to complete a hour lunch break, he sent her home to get the paint so that he could load it into several cans for the third coat; he turned it, and it was on like angel wings. We chose a satin finish so it not to compete with the shiny hardware—for Merco's attention. The neutral color is a nice break for her. "I've raised five kids," she says. "I want serenity!"

THE KITCHEN PROJECT TALLY

The homeowners kept the existing wall ovens, fridge, range hood, counter tops and sinks and already had the coffee maker. The dishwasher got cooked, but a vinyl flooring, light fixtures, and hardware are new, as are the perfectly aligned drawer and cabinet fronts.

Cabinet upgrades (including hardware)	\$1,050
Flooring upgrade	\$236
Appliance upgrades (including fridge panels)	\$4,254
Replacement faucet	> \$300
Wall paper/pendant	\$767
Light fixtures	\$132
Window blinds	\$676

TOTAL > \$85,227



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Even freshmen included areas \$100 for the coffee maker; sleek cabinet fronts and drawers only challenged for Nine Five, and a new gas cooktop.



ABOVE: Vicki and Tim Peterson rebuilt the family bath from the studs out, without the help of a single pro. They splurged on the sink (\$160) but found the antique-style glass lights at Habitat for Humanity RedStore for \$5 each.



BEST RE-DO BATH WINNERS

THEY DID IT THEMSELVES: GUTTED THEIR PUTRID GRINGE-BALL OF A BATHROOM AND TURNED OUT A PRISTINE AND RELAXING FAMILY RETREAT.



Tim started the bathroom demo the week I found out I was pregnant with our third. We'd been working on our four-bedroom, two-bath Craftsman for a solid year, juggling the kids and our jobs. The house was a total wreck. Every square foot needed work, but the original 1912 details were there, buried under layers of grime and plywood. Tearing up the main bath revealed the entire family had to use the upstairs powder room with a tiny tub, but there was no question it had to be done. There was black mold behind the vanity, and here plywood showed through the 60-year-old linoleum. During demolition, Tim pulled three mummified rats from the wall. You could say we were motivated.

Demolition happened by day, and Tim and I would sit down at night and talk about the design. I have treasured a centerpiece cabinet like one we'd had in a previous house, and when I found a large white built-in look alike on Craigslist, I snagged it before we even had the room ripped out. We stuck for a budget of \$10,000, enough to splurge on the sink and toilet if we did all the work ourselves. The black and white has the end subway tile came from a wholesale warehouse, and everything else was secondhand from the Habitat for Humanity ReStore or Craigslist. Then Tim made mud cardboard cutouts to scale of the major pieces—tub, sink, tub, and my prized cabinet—to arrange them on the floor plan. But the trickiest part was figuring out the design for the new floor tile. We settled on some sort of rag pattern, but there were endless possibilities. One evening I woke up to dozens of photos of various layouts, Tim had pulled up all night, sorting out paper houses and arranging them. We picked a diam and design and he set the tile by his



The old bath featured mold and deteriorating building grade materials. Everything plumbing included had to go.



WINNER
RENOVATION ROOKIES
 RESCUED AN 1894 QUEEN ANNE BY RELOCATING AND RESTORING IT, THEN LANDSCAPING AROUND IT TO A PERIOD-PERFECT APPEARANCE.



WINNERS' STORY

Eight years ago, our home, once the pride and joy of a prominent local family, stood vacant on a block where every other Victorian-era house had been destroyed at the turn of progress. If someone didn't step up to buy the place and move it out of town's way, it would have been razed.

Dawn and I weren't the Master candidates. We'd never done a home-improvement project more complicated than plaster repair, and we had absolutely no idea how to move a three-story house—much less where we'd put it. But the thought of losing this gem was demoralized was keeping us up at night. We decided to rescue it. After months of hatching out the details with local officials, a mover lifted the building onto steel skids and dolies and rolled it to its new spot a few blocks away.

The house needed everything: a new foundation and roof, major

fixes to the porches and drainage system, restoration of intricate details, such as finials and ridge capping, a new paint job. And that was just on the exterior! The interior, which hadn't been touched since the 1930s, was another story altogether. Our first step was to educate ourselves. We read everything we could get our hands on about historic preservation and Victorian-era design. For DIY training, we watched online videos and worked side by side with pros who were willing to show us the ropes. We repainted the exterior ourselves. Dawn even conquered her fear of heights to tackle the second and third stories.

We love gardening and did nearly all the planting—that is, after digging up truckloads of old bricks and concrete by hand on the new lot. A local arborist created the period-style landscape plan, including a perimeter, semi-circular garden in which beds and paths form a pattern best seen from the house's upper levels. It's one of our favorite outdoor features, though the hardscape was a bear to install.

As you might expect, we hit plenty of snags. We had to rebuild the limestone front porch, for example, after the mason had taken it apart for us and made a key showing where each stone went. But we had no let him go, and he left with that piece of paper—leaving us with a jumble of more than 100 stones to put back together again. Luckily, Dawn is a whiz at puzzles and we had some photos to guide us. It took us a couple of weekends, but we got it done.

Neighbors have called us crazy for taking on such a huge project. It's definitely been tough to keep up the momentum at times. But when people thank us for saving this house from the wrecking ball, we feel encouraged to keep going. We've still got plenty to do.



► **Join the winners—and the best of the rest!**
 To watch episodes, thoughts of the winner landscape around all the contest finalists, go to thisoldhouse.com/HO2012

TOP: Todd was prepped with Timothee 2 when demolition started. Now these kids use the restored claw foot tub as a \$100 Craigslist find. ABOVE: Timothee designs all different tile reg. patterns before they settled on this one.

Our son, Timothee, was born before we finished the shower, and we have a picture of him in a basket next to his dad and a basket of fruit. We're so proud of the clean, classic black-and-white look.

In all, this bath took us about 18 months, and it became a huge turning point for us. It's a confidence booster to wake up every morning and walk into a shiny fresh room and stand on tile that I've set myself and seal on my own. It's a relief to finally have a suitable bathroom for the family. But even so, it's not the best of what we were trying to do with this house.



Craftsman-style pendant and an electric fireless, glass-enclosed sauna salvaged from the homeowner's previous, much larger house separate the bedroom and bath.

BEST REDO LIVING SPACE

WINNER
Lynne Anderson
FARMINGTON, CONNECTICUT



Winning through the reds, the formerly gloomy, windowless attic began to show signs of potential.

TURNED A DARK, SPIDER-INFESTED UNFINISHED ATTIC INTO A LOFTY MASTER SUITE.



Redo It Yourself When I bought my 1920s cottage, 12 years ago, it had rooms on one

floor and an attic accessible only by a judd down ladder. There was a ton of space up there, but no windows and no floor—just exposed joists. It was dark and creepy and all but useless.

I wasn't sure what I wanted to do with it, but I'm in a historic district, so I tried to think three steps ahead. I hired up approval to add skylights and windows while keeping busy renovating the downstairs with the help of pros, who let me appreciate them. When we got to the kitchen, we bumped it out to make room for a kitchenette and plumbing for the upstairs. A carpenter reinforced the attic joists so that they could support what I gradually began to envision as my master suite.

I liked the windows and skylights put in, and by the time the top floor was prepped, I'd picked up enough skills to take on my dream project. After hiring out some basic framing and the plumbing and electrical for the bath, my friend and I missed the great good-bye and went total DIY. We hauled a table saw and a chop saw upstairs (at one point I nearly lost a thumb!), and we tied the bath, installed light fixtures, sub-flooring, and pane floorboards, and put up the tongue-and-groove ceiling. We built shelves topped with reclaimed heart pine and propped up a mirror so that you don't face a wall when you reach the top of the stairs.

I keep attic with pictures from magazines and my decorating ideas. I had been procrastinating for years. I knew I wanted the suite to feel simple and restful. The water pipes had to be an iron bed I first spotted 20 years ago in a store in New York. They still make it, and I brought it up in pieces. Finally, I made all the pillows and window treatments for the space. After retiring from an office job, it's a nice to enjoy a restful retreat filled with my own handiwork.

BEST REDO YARD

WINNER
David Trepp
NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA



WHAT HE DID: CRAFTED A DETAILED REPLICA OF THE TIMBER-FRAME BUILDINGS HE HAD ADMIRER ABROAD TO GIVE HIS DAUGHTERS A MAGICAL PLACE TO PLAY.



His Story I fondly remember my brother and I bonding over our side yard from the safety of our fort, an elevated structure on 4-foot posts that my dad had built for us. I wanted my daughters to have a place of their own to enjoy, so I built Devon, 13, and Lauren, 11, a one-and-a-half-story playhouse last year.

I didn't really have a proper plan 24 years ago when my wife, Elizabeth, and I bought a pair of carved worry dolls, complete with an iron lockset, from an antique dealer in Germany. We carried them along as we moved from Germany back to the U.S., and then they sat in the garage until I realized that I could build a playhouse in and then I designed the structure on five 3-D design software to lay out the joists, rafters, walls, and dormer, and used a tree so that I could rig up a hoist to lift the plywood to the roof. All the materials came from the home center. I had no special order the 4x6 door frame pieces and the 4x4 ridge beam, but all the other decorative beams are standard sizes of pressure-treated lumber. The first floor has two windows and a ladder up to the loft.

The hardest part was getting the foundation squares done a few sunny days and then waterproofing the structure before winter. I'll list the exposed pressure-treated wood age for about a year to develop cracks and check before I apply some oil of finish.

My girls are still learning the intricacies of the old iron lockset, but they use the playhouse all the time. When they're not having sleepovers, Devon takes to sit out there and read and Lauren likes to garden. It's a place where they can relax and just be sisters. ■

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The medieval German timber frame and shorts trapezoidal rafters and red-painted pine entry doors; a square and the Lauren and Devon— and the cut. Lucy, last winter's storm and exposed rafters made from black materials like rubber interior with salvaged materials and insulation.



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2012

MOXIE AWARDS

Each year, Moxie Awards recognize the most creative, innovative, and inspiring home improvement projects. The winners are chosen by a panel of judges, and the awards are presented at a special ceremony. The winners are chosen by a panel of judges, and the awards are presented at a special ceremony. The winners are chosen by a panel of judges, and the awards are presented at a special ceremony.



THE "DRINK YOUR WAY TO SUCCESS" AWARD

Jenae and Matt McGarity
PORTAGE, MICHIGAN



Jenae and Matt wanted a warm, natural backdrop that would contrast with the heavy granite counters in their new kitchen, and cork seemed like the perfect solution—until they priced 12-inch tiles of cork and found out they cost \$200 a pop. Not ones to quit, they fired off a new e-mail asking for advice from their muse cork. "Lucky for us, our friends are huge wine drinkers," says Jenae. After a long wait, one would guess the corking summer they saw was nearly 100 miles. Jenae shed their like-shed lots, glued the cork to the wall, slapped on some polyurethane, and then grouted over them. "Now we have a custom backdrop for a fraction of the price," says Jenae. And as your kitchen friends continue to show up with bags of wine cork,



THE "OLD COLLEGE TRY" AWARD

Courtney Patton and Bryan Baird
SPRING, NEW HAMPSHIRE



Despite being college students with heavy course loads and despite being over their heads in student loans, Courtney and her boyfriend, Gavin, pulled off the complete remodel of the dilapidated 1960s ranch they inhabit. The best part? It's a rental. "The landlord said that if we did the renovations and paid for them, he would let us live here rent-free for two years," explains Courtney. Not an easy job. The house was basically just a shell, she says. "The electricals and the plumbing didn't work. It was kind of a nightmare." Gavin knows plumbing, but they had to learn everything else from the "easy" jobs, like hanging drywall and installing cabinetry to rewire the house and installing radiant heat. During finals, the sweethearts would sprawl out with their books on raw subfloors. "We wanted our house to be beautiful," Courtney says. "But we still wanted good grades."



THE "ROCK STAR" AWARD

Patricia Jones
HILHAM, TENNESSEE



Patricia had always dreamed of building a stone wall on the 2½ acres surrounding her ranch-style home. Good thing there were plenty of limestone blocks lying around the neighborhood—scrap that road building crews had left scattered in the ditches. "They're free for the taking to anyone who was inclined," says Patricia. And coked the rest. After 106 road-trips in her three-quarter-ton pickup, she had gathered enough stones, rolling the big ones up a ramp, to build herself a solid wall 900 feet long. "Honestly, I need another 100 feet to get the job done," she says. "People offer to give me a hand, but I know where I want the stones to go, and I like the process. Every time I see it, I'll probably 'rock' until the day I die." Moxie Lady!



"I tore up nearly 1,000 square feet of nasty 30-year-old carpet by myself using nothing but a pocketknife." —Lauren Parke
AURORA, COLORADO



THE "LABOR DAY" AWARD

Kacey and John Owens
CARROLL, NORTH CAROLINA



On the day that Kacey and John raised the walls of their new master suite addition—part of a whole-house remodel—Kacey found out she was pregnant with the couple's first child. Did she let that stand in the way of their progress? Nope. "We finished the upstairs floors and moved the furniture into the living room the night I went into labor," she says. "We installed the kitchen sink the night I came home from the hospital."

THE "KERRI STRUG" AWARD

Mike Anson
HALETHORPE, MARYLAND



When an ill-fated evening gift left Mike with a snapped-on-two-ends, he didn't let the pain, the crutches, or even the cumbersome car get in the way of this bathroom remodel. You see, getting the job done was something of an emergency. "This was an unplanned project," Mike explains. "It discovered the problem when the toilet started sinking into the floor." Instead of drilling holes to run a pipe, the original plumber had simply cut notches in the joists. The joists, of course, eventually buckled, and when the toilet took a dive, Mike took action, limited it to wall-to-wall right through the drain into the ceiling. Despite the odds, our hobbled remodeler spent his evenings and weekends limbering up his joint to get on his hands and knees while waiting for his back to get better. (He gets it, now.) We're happy to report that the bathroom and the toilet have been put back together again.



THE "MACHO MAN" AWARD

Berry Jackson FRANKLIN, PENNSYLVANIA



Berry was really going at it with his sledgehammer, trying to demolish a partially collapsed chimney in the attic, when he tore not one but both outer cuffs. He had the doc operate on the more damaged one so that he'd have one free arm to finish the job. Within a month, he was back in the attic swinging away with his "good" arm, winning against each blow. The pain meds made him gassy, so he went without them. "They say you can't break your way out the pain," he says. "But it just plain hurt."

THE "HARDEST-WORKING WINDOW IN AMERICA" AWARD

Ray and Laura Blacklock
GLENVIEW, MONTANA



It takes a visionary to look at a dank and water-damaged basement and think, *Wow, wouldn't this make a great family room?* That is precisely what Ray and Laura did. After jack-

hammering the crumbling floor, they discovered what connected to a crack-filled reservoir beneath their 100-year-old house. They set about excavating all the concrete and muck by pouring through a tiny basement window (a 5-pallet truckle—20,000 pounds in all). They got help from the high school football team, which pitched in to lay rebar and pour the concrete footings, but still. The couple then poured concrete for the new floor and brought in 900 concrete blocks for new walls—through the same tiny window. Now they have a cozy family room with radiant heat, no-on ceiling and a built-in entertainment system.

Not that they've had time to enjoy it. After taking a week off, they pulled these kitchen



THE "NEVER-ENDING PROJECT" AWARD

Lou and Dennis Adams JAMA, CALIFORNIA



After using plywood 2x4s and studs to fabricate a wall with three Mexican hacienda style arches along the covered back porch, Lou went a little loco. "I was kind of shocked by how well they turned out, so I just kept on going," he says. He

didn't but more arches "popped up" on the other three walls until they had 13! The insanity didn't stop there. Within six months, Lou and Dennis had created an elaborate outdoor kitchen complete with custom tile and built-in seating, arched his bookshelves, and a greenhouse Macco covered fireplace. For an extra measure of madness, they added a bell tower. Yes, a bell tower.



THE "BACK TO BASICS" AWARD

Frank McNamee and Scott Bell ASHLAND, NEW HAMPSHIRE



Frank and Scott don't like to wait around. To do it would be two weeks before they could rent the pipe jacker they needed to install a new irrigation system, they put at the most four days on the ground with a picket, breaking up the rocky New England terrain by hand to install 850 feet of pipe.



THE "AGONY AND THE ECSTASY" AWARD

Kathy Blair MORRIS, OHIO



All Kathy wanted was a nice comfort-height toilet. And with arthritis, lifting vision and hips, who could blame her? When her existing toilet caused the bathroom floor to start rotting away, Kathy, despite her listing of ailments, decided to do something. She would redo the entire bathroom. By how? "If you need something bad enough, my philosophy is, you've gotta do it, no matter what," says one trooper. The hardest, most painful part of the remodel was contorting her superego into the crawl space so that she could replace the rotten joists beneath the toilet. The end of the project took several years, but she kept at it, replacing the floor, updating the decor, removing the tub, and installing the shower pan, the vanity toilet, and even a new vanity. "There were many days when I felt like I was losing my strength and couldn't go on," she says. "But I finished it, and I'm so proud of what I accomplished." So are we.

"I carried the 22-by-96-inch plywood through a narrow stairwell, to my third-floor apartment, on my back. Not an easy job for a five-foot-two, 55-year-old woman!"

—**Elaine Pitt** FALLS CHURCH, VIRGINIA



THE "BO IS THE NEW 40" AWARD

Margaret Salvetti and Rico Jerssoli
DAYTONA BEACH, FLORIDA



As she approached her 80th birthday, Margaret decided she'd had just about enough of the bland beige kitchen in her Daytona Beach condominium. So she called on her cousin Rico, an 85-year-old

former kitchen cabinetmaker. For some ideas, Rico immediately got to work in the carpet of his mobile home, building Margaret a beautiful 87-inch-wide solid cherry breakfast bar with eight raised-panel doors and two doors with stained glass inserts inside by a local artist. Since the piece was too big to move all at once, Rico designed it in seven sections, then made five trips to his cousin's house to deliver them. Although Margaret asked a building-maintenance manager to help her cousin get the breakfast bar into the back and into her fifth-floor condo, Rico wouldn't have it. "He's a little guy," Margaret says. "But he's awfully strong."



THE "FIRST-TIMER" AWARD

Gino Timberman
MILWAUKEE, PENNSYLVANIA



Some rookie DIYers think building a deck is cause for praise. Master mason, like our Gino, think not. Using hundreds of composite boards—enough to carpet a two-acre field in about—he constructed an elaborate octagonal pattern on his new deck that is worthy of the pros. To support the intricate bits, he cut and nailed nine joists diagonally between the full-length joists. He also spent some quality time doing precise calculations, figuring out all the tricky angled cuts to the edge-glue. "Somehow I got it on the first try," says Gino, sounding a lot less intimidated now we're

23 READER TIPS

that save time and money

You people are unbelievable. Or at least amazing. Every year, we ask you for your brilliant nuggets of advice—those clever little time-savers and why-didn't-I-think-of-that solutions—and you still offer up scores of hard-won pearls. Thanks again for a job well done.

1 | Caulk preserver



To keep caulk fresh for months after opening the tube, cut it with plastic wrap and a wire nut, and stand it upright in the fridge after. Just don't put the three-part.

Jackie Krige
TUCSON, ARIZONA

2 | Old-wiring fix

Whenever you're working on old electrical wires, you risk damaging the insulation and exposing the copper. To avoid that, I thread some heat-shrink tubing over

the wire and insulation, then slit it briefly with a heat gun fitted with a shrink-tubing attachment. The plastic tubing contracts to form a protective seal around the wire.

John LeBlond
WINDSOR, ONTARIO, CANADA

3 | Sneaky conduit snakes

Before pouring a new concrete floor in my den, the nice mason ran PVC conduit for wiring a pellet stove. Not a chance were the five 50'-length elbows in the 12 feet of conduit, which made running the electrical cable a cinch. I fed fishing line to a cotton ball

trimmed the ball to fit the conduit, and stuck it in the opening. Then I tamped the hose of a wet/dry vac to the other end of the pipe and sucked the cotton ball through, right along with its line. Fishing the cables was a cinch after that.

Cliff Whit
MEDIA, PENNSYLVANIA

4 | Homemade key keeper

I'm a 7-year-old boy who loves to watch *This Old House* with my dad and brother. I used to lose my keys a lot until I got a small keybelt into the wall and attached a hook made of an unfolded paper clip. Now I hang my keys on the clip so that I always know where to find them.

Gregory Reed
SHINGLE SPRING, CALIFORNIA

5 | Emergency crimper

You don't need crimping tool to fit together gutter downspout sections. Just give each groove a quarter turn with needle-nose pliers. The end will collapse enough to let it slip inside the next one.

Spencer Keldie
NEWPORT, OREGON

6 | Mud smoother



To keep setting-type joint compound from clumping after adding water, I use a cheap hand-sawed electric mixer with beaters that fit perfectly in the mud pan and blend the stuff smooth at low speed. This way, it's easy to mix small amounts; no bucket required.

Jake Ingersoll
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

7 | Screw lubricant

When driving big screws into studs, spray them first with WD-40. They will go in much easier.

Jessie Bell
COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO



Rita Powers
DURHAM, CONNECTICUT

PAINT MIXER

I find the best way to stir paint is with a kitchen whisk. It's quick, easy, and thorough, and cleanup is a breeze.



12

Mary Tompkins
KIRKWOOD, MISSOURI

SINK SAVER

I got a steal on porcelain sinks that had metal scratches, hoping they'd be easy to remove with Barkeepers Friend. No luck. Then I got the idea to use an automotive rubbing compound. The scratches are gone, and the sinks look beautiful.



9 | Clamping protection

The spent gift cards I collect are flexible, durable, and free. Among other things, I use them to keep clamps from damaging my work. I slip a couple of cards between the wood and the clamps before tightening the jaws.
Andrew Voronoff
FRANKLIN, TENNESSEE

10 | Post-it for pictures

Whenever I'm hanging pictures and need to mark where the hook will go, I put up Post-it notes

and make my marks on them. When I'm done, I just pull down the Post-its, and the wall stays nice and clean, except for the nail holes.
Brink Kling
COLUMBIUS, OHIO

11 | Wandering-washer cure

After we built a new floor, our washing machine slid around like a seal during the spin cycle. Rubber cups and vibration pads didn't work, but the rubber tender washers at the hardware store did. It's been rock steady ever since.
Gary Swiftworth
MAPLETON, UTAH

free advice
For another batch of free advice, visit us at www.howtosave.com/0292

started, remove the comb and sink the nail as usual.
Josiah Patterson
YPSILANTI, MICHIGAN

16 | Clamp for wires



When I'm installing wires for speaker connections or speaker valve controls, I hold them in place with springs that are stretched down at one end. I stretch the spring, place the wire in the coils, and release. The springs hold the wires tightly, are easy to adjust, and help dissipate the heat.
Gary McIner
LEONARD, MICHIGAN

17 | Soil softener

Before setting a metal post into hard ground, give the soil a good soaking. Attach a piece of 1/2-inch copper pipe to a garden hose

turn on the water, and push the pipe into the spot where you want to set the post. When the ground is sufficiently moist, remove the pipe and pound in the post with a small ledge.
Mark Jenclicher
SWANTON, OHIO

18 | Time-saver for screens

A quick tip for restoring: Wipe the spline with dish soap. It will slip into the groove quickly, without twisting or pulling the frame out of square. Hose off the soap and you're good to go.
Mike Trean
ARROW, OHIO

20 | Outlet marker

I was installing beadboard panels on the kitchen walls, a fairly easy task—and it came to cutting the holes for the electrical outlets. Then I had this thought: Take off the outlet cover, screw it on backwards, paint its outer rim white, and then—before the paint dries—press the panel against it. Save enough. I got an accurate line to guide the cut without measuring.
Ron Ryers
HICKORY, INDIANA

21 | Pipe clips



I never had a good way to hold my trailer's tarp in place until I made my own clips out of 4-inch PVC pipe. I cut it into 3-inch rings that made a size through each one. That allowed me to open them enough to clamp the tarp to the trailer. A black mark on the outside makes the opening easy to find.
David Karg
GRIMESLAND, NORTH CAROLINA

19

Gary Klink
BEND, OREGON

CABINET JIG

Plastic rubber squares make great jigs for positioning door and drawer handles. Drill holes in the squares, hook it on the edge of whatever needs a handle, and make a mark through the holes. Works perfectly every time.



22 | Drip attenuator

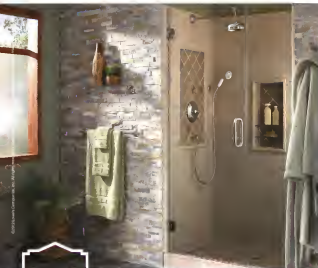
The loud plunk of water dripping in my downstairs was driving me crazy. So I stuffed an old toilet brush into the bottom elbow. The bristles break up the drops before hitting the noise, yet still allow water to flow through, even during downpours. Now I live torture-free.
Joan Scamale
HOWELL, HAWAII

23 | Pots for pots

When I plant window boxes and other pots, I line the bottoms with foam packing peanuts before adding soil. They're as effective as rocks at improving drainage, but don't add to a container's weight, making it easier to lift.
See Sketch
HAMPTON, MINNESOTA



ARRRGH.



Beating your head against a wall won't get that bath done. But once we get you started, it won't be long before the pain of a bath remodel becomes a pleasure.



lowe's.com/do

the readers of ask this old house

inside

SAFER WIRING

FEWER WEEDS

NO MORE COLD SHOWERS

MORE



62

tips, tricks, and
answers from
our handpicked
crew of reader
experts



My husband found
this little 4-inch-
long device in his
father's workshop.
Any idea what it could be?

—WENDY FEWELL QUINCY, ILLINOIS



It's an "indicator," a gauge that
mechanics use to determine if a bolt
or drill press is spinning true. You
clamp it to place and read the dial
at the tip of the triangular housing
against a rotating shaft. It'll indicate
even slightly, a needle at the other end of the housing
twitches, indicating that the shaft needs adjustment.

—Toby White, Shelton, Connecticut

PHOTOGRAPH BY
VICTOR SCHNIGER

July 2012 Reader-Driven \$22 | THEOLDHOUSE.COM 101

MRP replies If the existing ceiling is in good condition and doesn't have any water damage, one conservative option is to nail 4-by-8 inch sheets of tongue-and-groove plywood headboard right over it. The sheets come in several different styles, and you can find them unpainted, painted, or painted at your local home center. Make sure the panels are made with exterior-grade plywood, though; panels made of MDF are suitable only for use indoors.

To install, cut the panels to fit with the heads running perpendicular to the house, and use finishing nails to fasten them to the joists right over the old ceiling. Then nail quarter-round molding around the edges to trim it out and cover any gaps.

But if the old ceiling does show signs of water damage, remove it before putting up the new one.

LOCATE A BAD SMELL

After moving into our 1996 home, we immediately noticed a sewer smell in the master bathroom. We've checked all the traps and even taped off the tub's overflow drain, but the smell persists. —CHRISMAN

WRITERS NEAR HOT PIPES The first thing that you should check is the wax seal on the toilet. This is one of the major causes of sewer gas entering the house. Many times, a toilet wax seal won't show any water leakage but will leak sewer gas.

If that can't be the problem, have a plumber do a smoke test of the vent lines. There could be old vent lines that were not capped properly, the smoke test will show you where they are. After you think you've found them all, perform one more test to make sure you haven't missed any.



"It took six years to figure out what this contribution is. We wanted to see if you guys could pass its purpose."

Peter and Fern Burelli
CHESHIRE, CONNECTICUT

WHAT IS IT?



TOM SILVA SAYS I haven't seen one of these in years. It is an old-fashioned floorboard straightener designed to pull warped flooring at right angles to you nail it down.



ROGER COOK SAYS Lumberjacks once used this tool to strip bark off of logs before sending them to the sawmill. Then if things got sticky they'd use it as a back sawhorse.



RICHARD TRETHEVENY SAYS This is a pipe stretcher/splinter, made of wood, used by early plumbers who worked tight manholes and hickies. It's not a thing I don't think this thing was a huge help.



MARK ABRAM SAYS Robert Traverser or shapewear probably used it to bring wood pieces together. But I'd put it in my garden to scare away pesky rabbits. They'd think it was a trap.

Who do you believe? FOR THE ANSWER SEE PAGE 106

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

The Jaw-Notched Electric replied I think your concern is well founded. Wrong subject for a clever wordplay where they end up being "detected."

which means it can't safely carry as much current as it would under normal conditions.

As the very least, it would insulate the pipes and ventilate the cavity, if possible. But even insulation and ventilation may not help if the pipe stays hot for long periods of time, as I suspect it will during winter. The best solution would be to run the wires in another joint bay.

WEED CONTROL

I have an area along a fence, with loose soil, no water and no sun, where weeds thrive. I spend lots of time pulling them—it is so tedious, they're alive. What can I do instead? —D.J.

Amy Rose replies A weed is just a plant growing where it's not wanted. To get "good" plants to grow, you have to either make the environment suitable for them or find plants that do well in the environment you have. Either way, rooting out the weeds and introducing what you'd like to see growing there will change the environment, which will make it harder for the weeds to return.



Roger Cook comments This is a great opportunity to create a new planting area for native plants or groundcovers that like dry, shady conditions. A groundcover like barometer may be worth a try, for instance. New plantings, along with a 2- to 3-inch layer of mulch, will go a long way toward keeping the weed population in check.

can pump it into a desired system, then test to make sure pipes are protected to the temperatures you require. The stuff isn't cheap, but it will do the job. Be certain to have the fluid tested once a year to make sure its chemical inhibitors are at the proper level. Otherwise, it will attack the metal in the system.

FENCE POSTS SET IN CONCRETE

What's the best way to remove or break up the concrete holding an old fence post in place? I plan to install a new one at the same spot. —NED COOK

MRP replies Breaking up concrete is easier than you might think if you can get your hands on the right tool. Grab a 6-foot-long weed puller, sometimes called a digging bar, and slam the pointed end into the concrete wherever it's attached to the post. Keep at it until the concrete breaks, then wiggle the post back and forth a few times and pull it out. Finally, dig out the broken pieces of concrete.

VAPOR BARRIER FOR A SHOWER

I just discovered that my contractor didn't install a vapor barrier in my newly tiled shower. He said it's not necessary because he used cement backer board. Will that give me problems in the future? —NED COOK

Structuralinsulator replies Cement backer board is a good, stable substrate for tile and isn't affected by water, but it's not waterproof. With cement backer board, you need to do one of two things. Either lay sheet plastic over the studs before the

backer board is installed or apply a waterproofing membrane, such as Kerdi, Hydro-Bax, Hydro-Barron, or RedGard, to the backer board's entire surface after it's installed.

Your installation may or may not give you problems, but in the likely event that giant cracks in a corner, that crack will create a tunnel for water to reach the studs. Sorry to say, but the only real fix is to rip out the entire job and do it over the right way.



Tom Silva comments Building codes often require a sheet plastic vapor barrier behind the cement board, so first check what your local codes have to say. If your contractor didn't follow code, that should give you some extra leverage as you negotiate how to make things right.

Cement backer board is ready to tile only after it's vapor-proofed either with plastic sheathing on the back side or a waterproof membrane on the face.



HOT-WATER SHORTAGE

Our two-year old 50-gallon gas water heater doesn't provide enough hot water when two adults and four teenagers have to shower in the mornings. Should I add a second 50-gallon tank or a bedside water heater? —TJ, AZ

Jahlyla replies: Why not just go with one larger water heater? The cost won't be much more than the smaller tank, and maintaining one heater is always easier than taking care of two. Besides, chances are good that your existing gas line will reduce five or six inches to handle two tanks.

As for adding a tankless unit, you could install one downstream of the tank, but doing so would be expensive and would definitely require a larger line and a larger gas line. All that adds to the installation cost and

WHAT IS IT?

CARPET STRETCHER

There's a clue near the end of the caption: "Put the carpet on the floor." A Google search of "carpet on floor" led us right to a photo of this exact device and other Leonard Hinkle patents. —THE CARPETS



increases the length of time it takes for the energy savings to pay off, if ever.



Richard Tiethe

comments: Another way to increase your hot-water supply is to take shorter showers. But since teenagers tend to be uncooperative on that point, consider switching to 1.3-gal-per-minute, flow-restricting

showerheads. And if that doesn't do the trick, hire a plumber to install a tempering valve at the tank's hot-water outlet. This valve, also known as a thermostatic mixing valve, allows you to turn up the tank's temperature—and get more hot showers—on those rare occasions of scalding anyone. After the kids fly the coop, you can save yourself some money by turning the tank temperature back down to 125 degrees F.

TILE FLOOR IN A KITCHEN

We're remodeling our kitchen. Should we install the floor tile before or after the cabinets are in place? —KAY, CT, 32

Bill replies: It's 100 percent for installing tile after the cabinets are in but before the backsplashes are attached. You can save a good chunk of money, and it also makes future floor replacements easier. In my experience, people usually go through two or three new floors before updating their cabinets. However, you do want to tile under the dishwasher, the stove, and the fridge. It makes mopping and cleaning the appliances much easier, and it just looks better.

HOW DO I REMOVE FLOOR SHEATHING?

Under the existing carpeting in our new house, I discovered the OSB subfloor in one room was stained black by dog urine. I need to replace the subfloor, but if a glued and nailed to the joists. How do I get it off? —COURTNEY

Anastasia Kasper replies: This will not be a fun job. Using a circular saw, make long cuts in the stained portion of the subfloor parallel to the joists and then perpendicular to them. Set the blade depth to just a touch more than the thickness of the sheathing so that you don't accidentally nick a pipe, wire, or duct. After you make the cuts, simply nick each OSB rectangle off its joint. Next, grab the adhesive residue off the tops of the exposed joists with a belt sander outfitted with 36-grit sandpaper.

I'd also paint every surface in the rest of the room, including the stained subfloor, with a pigmented primer, such as BIN, which will seal



Off a kitchen floor by this time all the way into the upstairs. It's important to lay out that you have an under floor moving, in place, and cleaning under the refrigerator, stove and dishwasher.

off the odor that has probably permeated the entire space.



Tom Silva

comments: It's a nasty job, alright. If the OSB pieces don't come out easily, try slicing off the nailheads with a grinder or pulling them out with a cat's paw. Then I'd try to remove most of the adhesive with a paint scraper before sanding. And when you install the new subfloor, be sure that every edge that runs parallel to the joists runs on a joist or is supported by blocking.

TOILET LEAK

My toilet, which sits on a concrete slab, leaks. I've replaced the wax ring several times and

still find that the floor flange isn't perfectly level. Any suggestions before I pull the toilet again? —ROBERT TUPPE

Jahlyla replies: There's something else going on other than a flange that isn't level. Even if the flange was 1/4 inch lower on one side than the other, the wax seal would still conform to it.

So first make sure the flange is screwed down securely to the subfloor. Then, if the top of the flange is below floor level, use two screws—one stacked on top of the other.

Now raise the toilet. If the bowl rocks, the flange is probably uneven and the wax seal will be ruined over time. To remedy the bowl, slip plastic sheet underneath it after it's set.

HOW TO DRILL HOLES IN TILE

My 1930 house still has its original bathroom wall tiles. What's the best way to fasten a shower and without cracking them? —CHRISTY

Anastasia Kasper replies: To eliminate any possibility of cracking the tiles, your best bet is to use a masonry rod that holds itself up with spring pressure. And if you want the security of a shower rod held in place with screws, you'll need a carbide-tipped masonry bit or glass-and-ceramic bit.

First, take the bit—no matter if it's the drill—and position it where you want the anchor to go. Then tap the back of the bit with a hammer to make a slight dent in the tile's surface. This will keep the bit from wandering as it spins.

Now put the bit in your drill and slowly bore the hole. Blow out the dust, secure in a dish of 100-percent isopropyl alcohol to waterproof the hole, and install the rod's plastic sleeve anchors. Then screw the bases to the anchors and install the rod.

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Dear This Old House:

Even when the weekend got as packed as ours, we've gotten a lot of pleasure out of fixing up the 1840 house we bought three years ago here in Lexington, Mass. Now we're hoping someone will snatch up this 1840 Greek Revival near neighborhood and give it some TLC. The two-bedroom house—once owned by a U.S. Marshall appointed by President Lincoln—still has the original features that made it a knockout: the classic center hall, the front door with side lights, and the fine walnut railwork are just a few examples.

No doubt restoring it will take some serious elbow grease. The house needs structural work, and the brick exterior should be repointed. Inside, the walls, ceilings, floors, and wallpaper are in pretty bad shape. And new plumbing and mechanical systems are a must. It's a lot to take on, but as we learned, a project like this can reap many rewards.

Lexington is a tranquil river town with a slow pace of life. There are plenty of golf courses and fishing spots nearby. And our neighbors are some of the friendliest people we've ever met. We hope the next owner of this house will take pride in the life and living in an area that This Old House recently named to its 2012 Best Old House Neighborhoods list.

Sincerely yours,
Jim and Judy Sokoluk



1 The 1,040-square-foot two-bedroom Greek Revival is located in a national historic district. Its center hall and symmetrical floor plan are typical of the house's style. 2 The front parlor houses an original mantelpiece that will require some sprucing up. 3 The staircase off the center hall leads to the two upstairs bedrooms. 4 The kitchen retains its stone walls, original wood-coring, beams, and a working fireplace. The kitchen is one of the areas 20th-century buyers fit into the two-out-basement on the lower level.



Get a house? If you're interested in this house, please contact Wescore Home at 650-259-2792. The house was built in 1840. The house is a two-story house with a two-out-basement. The house is a two-story house with a two-out-basement.

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